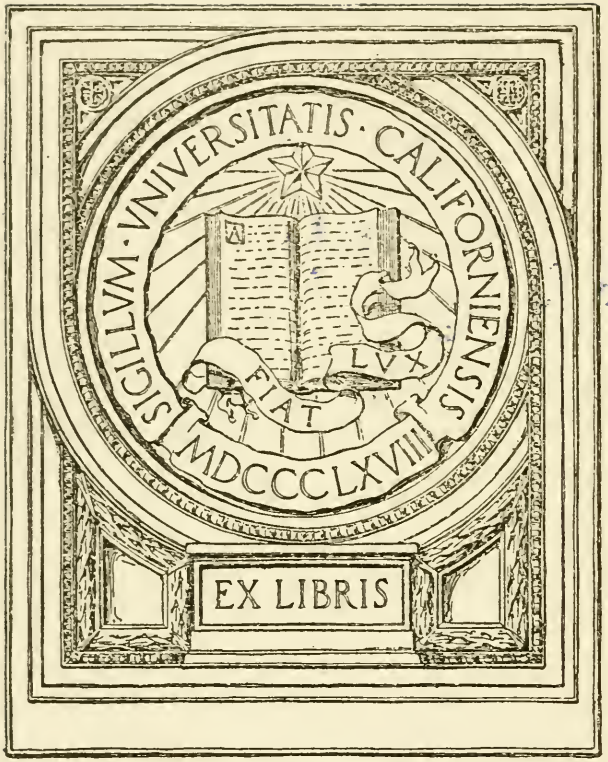
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THE EVOLUTION OF AN INTELLECTUAL

TO

MY WIFE

THE EVOLUTION OF AN INTELLECTUAL

BY JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY

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PREFATORY NOTE

The papers collected into this volume were written separately and for immediate publication at intervals during the last three years. Therefore they are not linked together by any deliberate scheme. Nevertheless, they are put forward as having an element of unity; as representing phases in the development of a point of view which may be of some interest, even though the interest be largely retrospective and historical; and as affording, at least, the material for the diagnosis of a movement of mind which is, I am persuaded, not wholly personal. For this reason I have been careful to present them in the order in which they were written. A more logical arrangement would, perhaps, have been possible, seeing

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that they treat of subjects ostensibly so diverse as poetry and politics. But the logic would have been arbitrary; for the division between an essay on poetry and an essay on politics is less profound than the division between a man's mind after two, and the same mind after three years of the grim experience that is called the Great War.

J. M. M.

Postscript:

The majority of these essays originally appeared in *The Times' Literary Supplement*, the *Nation*, and the *Athenæum*; and I thank the editors of those journals for permission to make use of them.

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THE EVOLUTION OF AN INTELLECTUAL

THE SIGN-SEEKERS

Among the many as yet uncomprehended things that the war is doing to our souls, we can hold fast to one that is certain. Those who instinctively turned to literature and art in the years before it, as to something permanent and real and true, have been confirmed in their devotion. More than this, what was a preference is become a conviction, and almost an idolatry. The faith in literature that could be lightly disturbed and easily intermitted is now unshakable. Perhaps the reality is higher and more remote than it was; it is the more fixed and unquestionable.

Others abide our question: thou art free. . . . And now it seems strange to us that we were once, if not blinded, dull of sight, to the calm

and transcending beauty of this ideal. It has now so much become that whereby we live that it is hard to understand how little, relatively little, we valued it in the time before.

Our old selves are unfamiliar to us; how unfamiliar appears most clearly when we now turn back and read a statement of literary ideals in the criticism of the years before the war. Not that the present criticism is better or in essence different. For this is a time of confusion. Men's nerves are on edge, and they can steady them best by repeating the mechanical exercises of old. We are conscious that this is an interregnum, and we allow for it. But before, things were otherwise; there was calm, and the issues were clear before us. We had the circumstance of certainty, and we were uncertain. The sense that we have been unprofitable servants is overwhelming.

The feeling is strange, and as hard to define as it is clear and unmistakable. It moved me profoundly a few days ago when I happened to read an article written by Mr. Arnold

Bennett in 1912, "On Writing Novels." It was not new to me; I had read it at the time when it was first published. It had interested, stimulated, and, above all, discontented me. I even tried to formulate my discontent to my own satisfaction; but I was not satisfied. I could point no nearer to the source of my discontent than to say that the article was based upon a confusion. Mr. Bennett had started with the conviction that novels all belonged to one kind of literary art, whereas in truth—so it seemed to me—there were great novels and good novels, and the distinction between these two was so ultimate that it vitiated any conclusion that might be drawn from considering them in the lump. I could get no farther. Beyond pointing out one or two novels that seemed to me indisputably great, and a number of so-called great novels that seemed as certainly, if not small, at least quite other than great, I could not go. I mumbled the names of Tolstoi and Dostoevsky to myself and wagged my head. It

seemed odd that the great ones should both be Russian, and that they alone should seem to come from another world than that in which Mr. Bennett is, to his own honour and our instruction, "a first-class literary expert."

And there the matter stood. Perhaps it would have been well if we had not been turned away from such inquiries. There might have been no war, seeing that there are moments when each man is secretly convinced that in himself he bore the seeds of this great disruption, by reason of his own disharmony. But we were what we were, and the war has passed over us and has made the dark things clear and the clear things dark once more. The certainties were transposed for us. The illimitable region of the ideal was fixed by constellations, the world of contacts and intercourse clouded in chaos.

Here we must move delicately. All who were capable of change—all, that is, who were in whatever degree living—have been changed by the war. Perhaps they have all been

changed according to the same form, but it is unlikely. One must therefore speak, carefully, for one's own generation; one must speak, principally, for one's self, not personally, but in the same sense that each one of us may be in a secret hour convinced that he must bear the burden of the guilt of the war. We must speak as knowing that inasmuch as we are symbols of the guilt we are symbols also of the hope and the future.

We are changed. In us a religious sense has been dimly awakened. The religious sense is not religion, though it may be. But it may take other and equally authentic forms. The hazard of its form is decided by the thousand dispositions which made us what we were before the war. One to whom a sullen, inarticulate opposition to an article "On Writing Novels" marked a spiritual epoch is not likely to have been changed into a communicant. But the accident of form will not make the reality of his illumination less. There will have been a twofold change,

in himself and in the world of his knowing, for him as for any other.

So we return to the article which is the voice of the past. Now the inarticulate dissatisfaction is vocal. The novels which were obscurely suspected to be of a kind apart are now clearly seen to be those which took count of this all-important evolution of the human soul; and their writers are recognised for men who had experienced this change, or at least had felt its imperious necessity. It is not for nothing that we were ready to go astray with a most uncivil disregard of Mr. George Moore's uplifted hands, over the vast horizons of Tolstoi and into the psychological *culs de sac* of Dostoevsky. We obeyed impulses that were truer than we knew. And when Mr. Bennett honestly confessed that he could not understand why his great novelists should be impatient of the toil necessary to a minor perfection, we were at any rate a little less puzzled than he. The exact precision of the comfortable literature of our youth repelled

us, and we plunged into the Russian world principally because we did not know whether we should ever emerge from it again. We wanted to breathe and to be free. Mr. Wells was with us, for he was always the youngest of old men. He charged at the tangle on our behalf, and if he failed it was because he was the child of his age, compelled to think in terms of a sociology that omitted, though he knew it better than we, the important things. He was our standard-bearer, and fought for us so bravely that when he failed we failed with him. And that generation which had reached the age of its first book-bills when "The New Machiavelli" appeared, will not easily forget the painful absorption with which it followed the fortunes of that well-fought day. If we have parted from him now, and our courses lie far asunder, we shall do well to remember that never, perhaps, has the champion of an older generation marched longer with a younger than did Mr. Wells. There were even despairing

moments when he seemed to be younger than ourselves.

But now we know, vaguely at least, where we stand. We stand before the need of new artists and the fact of a new world. That the map of Europe will be changed concerns us little; that German militarism should be crushed, hardly more. The fundamental thing is that the leaven of a religious sense is at work in the world. It does not know how to express itself. In some it is hardly more than a sense of inward violation and bruising that noble liberties should have been ridden over roughshod; in others, a need for a permanent in which consolation may be found; in others, again, a consciousness of guilt and shame for their treachery to their own values. But in all human resentment at an inhuman catastrophe is being tempered and mollified into a conviction of the ideal. The old psychology will no longer fit the facts, and the dreams and desires of men are no longer confined to a handful of sociological velleities.

So much for the material of the new artist. He himself, typical of the change, is penetrated with a sense of the high value of his art and the arduousness of its pursuit. He is on the threshold of new things; he looks out, like Joshua from the mountains, over a kingdom of promise, but unmapped. Seventy years have passed since Fromentin's despairing cry: *L'idéalisme a cessé, le lyrisme est tari.* Its last echo has now been lost in the tumult of war; and now perhaps, rising from the chaos of our shattered certainties,

"The world's great age begins anew . . ."

The writer faces an incalculable future, and he should begin to ask himself whether the inherited armoury will serve his turn. What is this "novel" and what shall he do with it? Shall he make an advance on Tolstoi and Dostoevsky? Shall he forge some new combination out of the spiritual awareness of the great Russians and the social security of the great Englishmen? Or does he not begin

to feel that this very social security is become precarious, that the undreamed-of danger of tyranny from a venal press ruling an unself-disciplined democracy is at hand? In other words, is not the growing spiritual awareness also a premonition of the end of a social order which has been the framework of English literature since the Civil Wars? It may well be so, and I am driven to believe it. But whether the change is embodied thus outwardly or not, the storm of transition is inevitable. And one may doubt whether English literature will ride it through on the English novel, which, in the hands of its youngest exponents, shows so few signs of elasticity or expansion.

We are not, as a race, critically minded. The word "orientation" has always a continental ring; and even a "tendency" is by nature suspect. English literature prefers to work blindly and in the dark; so does the nation. But now, even as the national mind of which it is a manifestation, it must take

stock of itself under peril of failing in its office. The one test of the reality of the conviction which it has gained through the war is the measure of its honesty in self-examination. There is, of course, the ready-made objection that a self-conscious art is sterile, that self-examination withers creative energy, that the essence of the matter is creative vigour, and the rest—mere words. It is even in theory hardly worth meeting. To be pointed to the splendid interdependence of poetry and criticism at the beginning of the last century is to be convinced of its falseness. And the facts of the present day are eloquent.

Could anything be more tenuous or more complacent than the novel as it is practised by the generation which is to succeed that of Mr. Wells, Mr. Conrad, and Mr. Bennett? Even its self-consciousness has no driving power. The self-analysis on which it is based never goes deep enough to compel the question, Is this worth while? Its experience is never

despotic, never metaphysically urgent, never more than a titillation. In the works of the three forerunners who have been named we are in contact with a world in which souls, even though they may be for the most part maimed and thwarted, are with their whole vigour at work. They put up a fight. These merely squirm. No doubt, this spiritual squirming was characteristic of youth before the war, and deserved to be recorded. But to squirm and think oneself a mighty fine fellow for it, to squirm as one born to the conviction that this is the whole duty of man—is a confession of futility and death.

Yet, with one brilliant and unbalanced exception, the younger novelists of to-day are confined to this puny gamut. Looking at their work one can conceive it said that they merited the war, for they had no values. What values they have are merely negative: a faint desire not to be as the herd feebly reflected in the characters they drew. Not one of them—

with the same one exception—had a moral attitude towards the war. At most they have made the attempt to ignore it, which is worse by far than to be wholly of it. A passionless platitude in the *Labour Leader*, another 400 page squirm, with the promise of another and another every year until the war shall end—these are the heights. And the depths . . . Truly, we are unprofitable servants.

One speaks one's own condemnation; but surely it must be spoken. We need to be conscious of our shame, deeply aware that we bear the burden of the guilt, ready to cast away the old barren littleness of soul. We are in danger of being too old for the future and too young for the past; and there is no present. How shall we be prepared to live dangerously? To do that we must be prepared. The generation that is really new must live dangerously, for it must know that social security is henceforward only a phrase, and a ready-made artistic tradition only a thin

excuse for not feeling, not striving, not doing. The future will take care of itself. It will be dangerous enough. This generation must take care that it belongs to the future.

Peering into that future we can see that it will contain experiments innumerable, as those who belong to it feel their way out of the chaos ; and since they will need to express first of all that which is new in order that they may assure it to their possession, they will be concerned most eagerly to set down the heightened spiritual awareness. A new poetry will arise, perhaps much given to dramatic form, hypersensitive with the memory of barren years, shot with the changing lights of many, mutually alien, perceptions and contradictory experiences—a poetry wherein humanity may be deliberately figured after the fashion of puppets in a show. And then someone will come, when that generation has borne the torch for its allotted span, who will see the new and the old together, discerning

the premonitions of the new in the old, from each elicit its significance and shape them into a harmony: and the form of that achievement also will not be the novel.

October, 1916.

THE HONESTY OF RUSSIA *

It is not to be denied that Russian thought is chiefly manifested in the great Russian novelists. Tolstoi, Dostoevsky, and Tchehov made explicit in their works conceptions of the world which yield little in definiteness to the philosophic schemes of the great dogmatists of old, and may perhaps be regarded as superior to them in that by their nature they emphasise a relation of which the professional philosopher is too often careless—the intimate connection between philosophy and life. The Russian novelists attacked fearlessly and with a high devotion, of which we English readers are slowly becoming sensible, the fundamental problem of all philosophy worthy the name.

* Written as a Preface to a translation of Léon Shestov's Essays.

They were preoccupied with the answer to the question: Is life worth living? And the great assumption which they made, at least in the beginning of the quest, was that to live life must mean to live it wholly. To live was not to pass by life on the other side, not suppress the deep or even the dark passions of body or soul, not to lull by some lying and narcotic phrase the urgent questions of the mind, not to deny life. To them life was the sum of all human potentialities. They accepted them all, loved them all, and strove to find a place for them all in a pattern in which none should be distorted. They failed, but not one of them fainted by the way, and there was not one of them but with his latest breath bravely held to his belief that there was a way and that the way might be found. Tolstoi went out alone to die, yet more manifestly than he had lived, a seeker after the secret; death overtook Dostoevsky in his supreme attempt to wrest a hope for mankind out of the abyss of the imagined future; and Tchehov died when his

most delicate fingers had been finally eager in lighting "The Cherry Orchard" with the tremulous glint of laughing tears, which may perhaps be the ultimate secret of the process which leaves us all bewildered and full of pity and wonder.

These were great men and great philosophers. It may be that this cruelly conscious world will henceforward recognise no man as great unless he has greatly sought: for to seek and not to think is the essence of philosophy. To have greatly sought, I say, should be the measure of man's greatness in the strange world of which there will be only a tense, sorrowful, disillusioned remnant when this grim ordeal is over. It should be so: and we, who are, according to our strength, faithful to humanity, must also strive according to our strength to make it so. We are not, and we shall not be, great men: but we have the elements of greatness. We have an impulse to honesty, to think honestly, to see honestly, and to speak the truth to ourselves in the

lonely hours. It is only an impulse, which, in these barren, bitter years, so quickly withers and dies. It is almost that we dare not be honest now. Our hearts are dead: we cannot wake the old wounds again. And yet if anything of this generation that suffered is to remain, if we are to hand on any spark of the fire which once burned so brightly, if we are to be human still, then we must still be honest at whatever cost. We—and I speak of that generation which was hardly man when the war burst upon it, which was ardent and generous and dreamed dreams of devotion to an ideal of art or love or life—are maimed and broken for ever. Let us not deceive ourselves. The dead voices will never be silent in our ears to remind us of that which we once were, and that which we have lost. We shall die as we shall live, lonely and haunted by memories that will grow stranger, more beautiful, more terrible, and more tormenting as the years go on, and at the last we shall not know which was the dream—the years of plenty or the

barren years that descended like a storm in the night and swept our youth away.

Yet something remains. Not those lying things that they who cannot feel how icy cold is sudden and senseless death to all-daring youth, din in our ears. We shall not be inspired by the memory of heroism. We shall be shattered by the thought of splendid and wonderful lives that were vilely cast away. What remains is that we should be honest as we shall be pitiful. We shall never again be drunk with hope: let us never be blind with fear. There can be in the lap of destiny now no worse thing which may befall us. We can afford to be honest now.

We can afford to be honest: but we need to know how to be honest, or to increase our knowledge. The Russian writers will help us in this; and not the great Russians only, but the lesser also. For a century of bitter necessity has taught that people that the spirit is mightier than the flesh, until those eager qualities of soul that a century of social

ease has almost killed in us are in them well-nigh an instinct. Let us look among ourselves if we can find a Wordsworth, a Shelley, a Coleridge, or a Byron to lift this struggle to the stars as they did the war that followed the French Revolution. There is none. It will be said: "But that was a great fight for freedom. Humanity itself marched forward with the Revolutionary armies." But if the future of mankind is not in issue now, if we are fighting for the victory of no precious and passionate idea, why is no voice of true poetry uplifted in protest? There is no third way. Either this is the greatest struggle for the right, or the greatest crime that has ever been. The unmistakable voice of poetry should be certain either in protest or enthusiasm: it is silent or it is trivial. And the cause must be that the keen edge of the soul of those century-old poets which cut through false patriotism so surely is in us dulled and blunted. We must learn honesty again: not the laborious and meagre honesty of those who weigh advantage

against advantage in the ledger of their minds, but the honesty that cries aloud in instant and passionate anger* against the lie and the half-truth, and by an instinct knows the authentic thrill of contact with the living human soul.

The Russians, and not least the lesser Russians, may teach us this thing once more. Among these lesser, Leon Shestov holds an honourable place. He is hardly what we should call a philosopher, hardly again what we would understand by an essayist. The Russians, great and small alike, are hardly ever what we understand by the terms which we victims of tradition apply to them. In a hundred years they have accomplished an evolution which has with us slowly unrolled in a thousand. The very foundations of their achievement are new and laid within the memory of man. Where we have sharply divided art from art, and from science and philosophy, and given to each a name, the Russians have still the sense of a

* "Let falsehood like a discord anger you."
DONNE (to Sir Henry Goodyere).

living connection between all the great activities of the human soul. From us this connection is too often concealed by the tyranny of names. We have come to believe, or at least it costs us great pains not to believe, that the name is a particular reality, which to confuse with another name is a crime. Whereas in truth the energies of the human soul are not divided from each other by any such impassable barriers: they flow into each other indistinguishably, modify, control, support, and decide each other. In their large unity they are real; isolated, they seem to be poised uneasily between the real and the unreal, and become deceptive, barren half-truths. Plato, who first discovered the miraculous hierarchy of names, though he was sometimes drunk with the new wine of his discovery, never forgot that the unity of the human soul was the final outcome of its diversity; and those who read aright the most perfect of all books—"The Republic"—know that it is a parable which foreshadows the complete harmony of all the soul's activities.

Not the least of Shestov's merits is that he is alive to this truth, in its twofold working. He is aware of himself as a soul, seeking an answer to its own question; and he is aware of other souls on the same quest. As in his own case he knows that he has in him something truer than names and divisions and authorities, which will live in spite of them, so towards others he remembers that all that they wrote or thought or said is precious and permanent in so far as it is the manifestation of the undivided soul seeking an answer to its question. To know a man's work for this, to have divined the direct relation between his utterance and his living soul, is criticism: to make that relation between one's own soul and one's speech direct and true is creation. In essence they are the same: creation is a man's lonely attempt to fix an intimacy with his own strange and secret soul, criticism is the satisfaction of the impulse of loneliness to find friends and secret sharers among the souls that are or have been. As creation drives a man to the know-

ledge of his own intolerable secrets, so it drives him to find others with whom he may whisper of the things which he has found. Other criticism than this is, in the final issue, only the criminal and mad desire to enforce material order in a realm where all is spiritual and true; it is the jealous protest of the small soul against the great, of the slave against the free.

Against this smallness and jealousy Shestov had set his face. To have done so does not make him a great writer; but it does make him a real one. He is honest and he is not deceived. But honesty, unless a man is big enough to bear it, and often even when he is big enough to bear it, may make him afraid. Where angels fear to tread, fools rush in: but though the folly of the fool is condemned, some one must enter, lest a rich kingdom be lost to the human spirit. Perhaps Shestov will seem at times too fearful. Then we must remember that Shestov is Russian in another sense than that I have tried to make explicit here. He is a citizen of a country where the

human spirit has at all times been so highly prized that the name of thinker has been a key to unlock not merely the mind but the heart also. The Russians not only respect, but they love a man who has thought and sought for humanity, and, I think, their love but seldom stops "this side idolatry." They will exalt a philosopher to be their king; they are even able to make of materialism a religion. Because they are so loyal to the human spirit they will load it with chains, believing that they are garlands. And that is why dogmatism has never come so fully into its own as in Russia.

When Shestov began to write nearly twenty years ago, Karl Marx was enthroned and infallible. The fear of such tyrannies has never departed from Shestov. He has fought against them so long and so persistently—even in this book one must always remember that he is face to face with an enemy of which we English have no real conception—that he is at times almost unnerved by the fear that he too may be made an authority and a rule. I do not

think that this ultimate hesitation, if understood rightly, diminishes in any way from the interest of his writings: but it does suggest that there may be awaiting him a certain paralysis of endeavour. There is indeed no absolute truth of which we need take account other than the living personality, and absolute truths are valuable only in so far as they are seen to be necessary manifestations of this mysterious reality. Nevertheless it is in the nature of man, if not to live by absolute truths, at least to live by enunciating them; and to hesitate to satisfy this imperious need is to have resigned a certain measure of one's own creative strength. We may trust to the men of insight who will follow us to read our dogmatisms, our momentary angers, and our unshakable convictions, in terms of our personalities, if these shall be found worthy of their curiosity or their love. And it seems to me that Shestov would have gained in strength if he could have more firmly believed that there would surely be other Shestovs who would read

him according to his own intention. But this, I also know, is a counsel of perfection: the courage which he has not would not have been acquired by any intellectual process, and its possession would have deprived him of the courage which he has. As dogmatism in Russia enjoys a supremacy of which we can hardly form an idea, so a continual challenge to its claims demands in the challenger a bravery which it is hard for us rightly to appreciate.

I have not written these words in order to prejudice the issue. Shestov will, no doubt, be judged by English readers according to English standards, and I wish no more than to suggest that his greatest quality is one which has become rare among us, and that his peculiarities are due to Russian conditions which have long since ceased to obtain in England. The Russians have much to teach us, and the only way we shall learn, or even know, what we should accept and what reject, is to take count as much as we can of the Russian realities. And

the first of these and the last is that in Russia the things of the spirit are held in honour above all others. Because of this the Russian soul is tormented by problems to which we have long been dead, and to which we need to be alive again.

November, 1916.

"THE DREAM OF A QUEER FELLOW"

Up till the present the English public—and in this I do not for one moment pretend that the English public is different from any other—has found it difficult to conceive that a novelist can, or indeed should, be anything else than a teller of stories. That he should be a philosopher in the sense that his work should be the profound expression of his attitude towards life; that this attitude should decide the manner in which he presents his experiences; and finally that only by virtue of the passion which the problem rather than the fact of life awakens in his soul he is worthy to be called a great novelist—these are yet far from being the commonplaces of criticism that they should be.

It is not the whole truth of the novelist. The novelist does indeed tell a story of lives and miseries and triumphs that are particular and human; but he also speaks a parable. Those who read the story and do not understand the parable are perhaps blessed, but they are blessed as the poor in spirit. And those who profess to understand the parable without loving and being moved by the humanity of the story are liars, and there is no health in them. On this side English readers and English criticism will not fail. On the other it will and does.

And yet the issue is simple. An artist, great or small, works for the salvation of his own soul above all other things. If he works for other things he is a journeyman and a hireling. If he is a novelist, he may write because he looks upon the world and sees that it is good, and his joy is such that he must recreate it for others, infused with the joy that he has found in it. But it must not be forgotten that joy and acceptance are a perfect

and complete philosophy. They are even the greatest of all philosophies when they do not exclude misgiving and perplexity, when doubt is weighed in the balance against certainty and cannot prevail. But artists like these belong to the heroes of old. The man who in modern times was most richly endowed with their spirit was Tolstoi. But the old confidence left him, and left him a prey to doubts and torments that seemed to his accepting mind so horrible and unnatural that he dared not reveal them. There has been no one like Tolstoi these hundred years, for his deep and miraculous joy in life; and if this failed him, surely we may conclude that the age of acceptance is past, and that the men who will speak for the humanity of the future will be those who have wrestled all their lives long with a great doubt, who will endeavour to prove that there is a good hope, and yet will always in their heart of hearts mistrust their reasoning. I have said we may conclude this; but it is indeed no matter of conclusion

or argument. It is now become a part of our inheritance.

But that a great artist should be essentially like ourselves—this is so hard for many to allow. Art must be a miracle to them, or it is not art. That they should be taken by the sleeve and invited to look into the secret impulses of the artist's soul is so much sacrilege to them, that even if they have seen they will deny that anything was there. And perhaps they are speaking truth. Perhaps there is not one general life, but many lives, and between them a gulf is fixed, so that the one will never understand the other. But there will still be those who believe themselves on the side of the artists, and who, because they believe it, will be truly on their side, who believe that somehow art is the supreme human activity, that it is an abstract and brief chronicle of time, of life, of all philosophies, all aspirations, all realities. They will never believe that art is set apart from them by the gulf of a miracle, or that the soul of even the

greatest among artists passes their understanding. Perhaps they are wrong, but they will go to their grave in their delusion, for without it they cannot live.

First to understand themselves, then to reach out after the souls of the mighty ones who have spoken for them, to live it may be lonely, but at least upon the heights. Perhaps this is after all only one of many lives, but it is no ignoble one. And what if the heights are not heights at all, so long as we believe they are, and to believe otherwise is, to us, an incredible folly? One thing is certain—that the joy of discovering in a great artist that deep community, without which understanding is only a phrase, is undivided and unmistakable. To it there is no short way, however. One can only hold one's breath and listen for the undertone, in the sure knowledge that it is there to be heard. That, too, is unmistakable. There comes a moment when one feels that every word that he is reading comes from within him, and not from without any more,

when he is conscious of nothing but the throb and the anguish of a human soul that at once is and is not his own. Upon that moment he can only wait.

In so far as that moment can be held in any single expression of an artist's lifelong striving, it is contained in "The Dream of a Queer Fellow." The very title might serve for an account of the whole of Dostoevsky's life and work.

It is an epitome of the problems which tormented him. And yet it seems so simple and straightforward: a dream, another world like our own, a beatific life in a golden and innocent age, and then the knowledge of good and evil and the fall. It is not so very different from the universal legend of Paradise, of the world without pain of which mankind has dreamed since dreams began. Because it is so simple, it should be received with fear, in the spirit in which Dostoevsky himself said that he feared simple men far more than complex men. Great men know the cold

terror of all ultimate simplicities, when the soul trembles with the longing to be done with dreams and torments, and to say clearly and once for all, yea or nay, and yet because of its trembling the tongue cannot speak.

There are many of these ultimate simplicities in this dream of Dostoevsky's. Into it he, the great fighter for humanity, seems to have gathered them all; perhaps to have tried, in the last years of his life before he grappled with his final achievement, "The Brothers Karamazov," to say clearly to the world what it hardly understood, that he was contending on its behalf against a despair which, if it once took hold of human hearts, would leave them dead.

"The Dream of a Queer Fellow"—I write the words again and they appear doubly pregnant with meaning. It is a true and terrible phrase; true, because we are all queer fellows dreaming, and we are queer just because we dream, terrible because of the vastness of the unknown which it carries within itself, because it sets loose the tremendous and awful question:

What if we are *only* queer fellows dreaming? What if behind the veil the truth is leering and jeering at our queerness and our dreams? What if the queer fellow of the story were right, *before* he dreamed? What if it were really "all the same"?

What if it were all the same not once but a million times, life after life, world after world, the same pain, the same doubt, the same dreams? The queer fellow went but one day's journey along the eternal recurrence which threatens human minds and human destinies. When he returned he was queer. There was another man went the same journey. Friedrich Nietzsche dreamed this very dream in the mountains of the Engadine. When he returned he, too, was queer.

Where shall a bound be set to the ravages of this disease of knowledge and despair? Without it we are as the beasts that perish; with it we perish as the beasts, having thought a few queer thoughts, having done a few queer things, having dreamed a few queer dreams. Elsewhere I have tried to show

where Dostoevsky himself strove to set the bound, and that he could not set it this side of humanity. Let it suffice that Dostoevsky spent his final strength in the effort to create a new life and a new man.

"The Dream of a Queer Fellow" came to my knowledge late, when my thought upon Dostoevsky was already formed; if it had not been so I might honestly have been able to say that it was the key to his work. But now I do not believe it. Alone, it may be only a simple, beautiful, and tragic story: I do not know. But when the memory is crowded with visions of all the queer fellows with whom Dostoevsky peopled his terrible world, when they and all the dreams they dreamed —the dreams of Raskolnikov, of Rogozhin, of Svidrigailov and Ivan Karamazov—are remembered as the dreams of the queer fellow who was Fyodor Dostoevsky: then, I do know that it is something utterly different from a simple story, that it is something vast and terrible and true.

November, 1916.

THE DISCOVERY OF PAIN

Those who are watching French literature with the sensitive attention that comes of old sympathy begin to be aware of a profound change in it. They respond reverently to the tremors of a painful birth; the echoes of a grim and terrible perturbation of the human consciousness perturb them too. Even though they try to hide the truth from their souls by a sleek assumption of foreknowledge, the moment comes when they must allow that the full discovery of pain and death, which has been given to this generation above all others, is pregnant with consequences that may shape the creative mind of man.

And then they turn with disappointment, that will not be resigned, to the literature of England. Are we blind, will our lips not

move, are we afraid? Shall there not be in England too that bravery of the spirit without which the bravery of the body will pass with the body into forgetfulness? The strange and splendid honesty of soul which seemed once to be the prerogative of Russia alone is descending upon France also. Within a few short months Barbusse, Benjamin, Romains, and Duhamel, young men of letters whom before the war we knew were not unlike their similars in England, have now with a common impulse of the spirit passed beyond them into another world. In them the war has cauterised the lie in the soul. They have lived out the war, have shrunk from none of its infinite contacts, and, having torn away a web of half-truths and half-honesties, have responded cleanly. In their work we begin to hear as it were the ring of a crystal glass that is struck. Though the sound is strange, we have no doubts or hesitations in lending ear; we know that the soul is true. The voice is strange because it is true, and because

the happening has been beyond their foreseeing and ours.

M. Duhamel's part in the discovery of the suffering human spirit has been played wholly within a hospital. He whom we knew only for a poet is a doctor, and by his gracious calling he has been placed at the very ganglion of the nerves of war. But the fact of his calling is important in another way than this. By it he must have dealt with pain and been fellow with suffering always. His book is a confession that he knew nothing of them before ; the old truths of pain are lies.

C'est un bien naïf besoin d'égalité qui nous fait dire que les hommes sont égaux devant la souffrance. Non ! Non ! les hommes ne sont pas égaux devant la souffrance. Et, comme nous ne connaissons de la mort que ce qui la précède et la détermine, les hommes ne sont pas même égaux devant la mort.

It may be said that this is only an assertion ; but it will not be said by anyone who reads the book,* for its ideal purpose (and its achievement) is to show that the assertion is true.

* "Vie des Martyrs," par Georges Duhamel.

One by one the martyrs pass before us, each so marked that he will never be forgotten, not by his wounds, but by his pain, which is thus proved co-extensive with the human soul. The equality of all men before pain proves to be the only necessary assumption made by the healing art lest it be distracted from its stern endeavour to win life from death; but the man who follows the art of truth, who is the artist, knows that pain is individual, inaccessible, incommunicable. And herein lies the most cruel tragedy of all:

> En dépit de toute protestation de sympathie, l'être dans sa chair souffre toujours solitairement, et c'est aussi pourquoi la guerre est possible. . . .

But here also, in these words, is the vision and the mission of the artist in war. To his imagination the incommunicable pain is communicated. Not leagues of nations, not international socialism, therefore, have in themselves a virtue which will guard humanity against this thing; their virtue rests upon an imaginative understanding of the possibilities of pain.

Without this they are empty forms; without this even a frequentation of bodily pain is of no avail. One of the most searching stories in this book is that entitled "La Grâce." It tells merely of Grégoire, who was not a *bon blessé*. He did not bear his pain heroically, because the will was lacking to make the effort. He spoke but seldom and harshly; he was not loved; the ladies who came to visit the hospital did not care to give their presents and their conversations to one who rarely growled out a "Thank you"; the orderlies avoided him. Only the doctor understood.

Grégoire n'y met pas de mauvaise volonté. Parfois, je devine, à un froncement de ses sourcils, qu'il fait un effort pour résister à la souffrance, pour l'accueillir d'un cœur plus ferme et plus allègre. Mais il ne sait pas faire l'effort nécessaire.

Si l'on vous demandait de soulever une locomotive, vous feriez peut-être aussi un effort; vous le feriez sans confiance et sans succès. Alors ne dites pas de mal de Grégoire.

But Auger, on the contrary, was popular with every one. He too had suffered unbelievably, but he had mastered his suffering.

Je comprends pourquoi l'on aime Auger: c'est qu'il est rassurant. A le voir, à l'entendre, on juge que la souffrance n'est pas une chose si affreuse. . . . Ceux qui vivent loin du champ de bataille, et qui visitent les hôpitaux pour prendre un peu l'air de la guerre, regardent Auger et s'en vont contents de tout: des évènements, de lui et d'eux-mêmes. Ils trouvent que le pays est bien défendu, que les soldats sont braves et que les blessures, les mutilations, sont des choses à coup sûr sérieuses mais supportables.

Not the frequentation of pain, therefore, or anything less searching than the eye of the imagination, will see the truth.

As we read these lives of the martyrs we are penetrated with the awful significance of the distinction between the *bon blessé* and the *mauvais*, between Auger and Grégoire. With it we seem to touch the remotest depths of the human soul, and to be in contact with life where it is not yet, or is no longer, divided from death. There is a point at which pain is so terrible, the mutilation so ghastly, that the will to live, the last and most fundamental instinct of man, flickers and dies. Beyond it, though the man lives, he is dead, not metaphorically but actually, for the spiritual flame

of life is extinguished. In this debatable country of the soul men battle, struggling not to live but to retain the desire to live; of those who cannot retain it their fellows are afraid, not merely afraid that they too may be discouraged and may yield, but afraid of the dying man as of one who has made the great refusal. For all our will to be honest we dare not think out the implications of this instinctive morality of pain. Let us merely remember that the pain of war does so denature man that, though he struggles, he cannot retain even the impulsive desire to live.

To fan and feed this sinking flame, we can see, was M. Duhamel's most terrible task. Sometimes, as if by a miracle, he succeeded, though it must have seemed that the spark of life was so precarious that even a mistaken word must put it out. For eternal witness of this desperate poise we have the little story of Tricot.

Tousser, cracher, chercher avec des yeux ronds d'angoisse une respiration introuvable, ne plus avoir de mains pour se

gratter, ne pas pouvoir manger tout seul, et même n'avoir jamais la moindre envie de manger, ce n'est pas une existence; et, cependant, Tricot n'abandonnait pas la partie. Il poursuivait sa propre guerre avec la patience divine d'un homme qui a mené la grande guerre du monde et qui sait que la victoire ne viendra pas comme ça tout de suite. . . .

Mais Tricot n'avait ni alliés, ni réserves; il était tout seul, tout maigre et si épuisé qu'un jour vint où il passa insensiblement de l'état de blessé à l'état d'agonisant.

C'est juste à ce moment qu'il lui poussa un bouton sur le nez.

Henceforward Tricot could think of nothing else, and, moaning of it, he died. It had killed him.

"Le Sacrifice" tells how the will to live was fostered in Léglise, whose two legs were amputated, one by one, after long delays in which he could not be persuaded to consent. The doctor himself hesitated before the second operation, not knowing whether he had the right to persuade him to desire to live ("Je finis par avoir honte de lui demander un tel sacrifice"), until at last, while he walked up and down in the garden thinking upon it, the birds and the spring sang together, "Il a tort,

il a tort," and a victory—a terrible half-victory at best—was won against death. Then there is Mercier, who died even though he believed with all his heart that he must live, because though he was not forty his hair was nearly white with work and sorrow, and he felt that some happiness must be awaiting him.

Vous me sauverez quand même, dit-il ; j'ai eu une vie trop malheureuse pour mourir déjà, n'est-ce pas, monsieur ?

When Mercier died, big tears rolled down from his dead eyes.

We enumerate all these men in memory, and with each name our knowledge of the fact of suffering reaches out one degree farther to the unanswerable truth ; for it is knowledge that M. Duhamel gives us, and not the quick and impulsive reaction to sudden horror. Against that he has steeled himself, so that the recoil of sense before torn flesh and the stench of wounds has no power to shake his hand or unnerve his mind. Beyond and apart from these things, his mind is at the work of

imperishably recording that men suffer after their own image and in their own loneliness. We feel that he is fronting on our behalf that which we have not dared to look upon, and that he is shaping on the reality itself an idea whose dim beginnings we have thrust into the darkness of our minds.

J'entends encore [he writes of the ordeal of Verdun] ce petit garçon vidé de sang me dire avec une voix suppliante: "Sauvez-moi, docteur! Sauvez-moi, pour ma mère . . ." et je pense qu'il faut avoir entendu ces phrases-là dans de tels endroits pour les bien comprendre, je pense qu'il faut tous les jours se faire une idée plus exacte, plus stricte, plus pathétique de la souffrance et de la mort.

That is the purpose and the achievement of M. Duhamel in "Vie des Martyrs." He is not putting a case; he is revealing a truth, the more urgent to be revealed because the lips of those who have apprehended it most largely are locked in the silence of the grave. Unless we receive the vision of this truth into our hearts the lie in the soul which has made its manifestation possible will be indurated for ever. Having this knowledge, our thoughts

and our words and those of our posterity will be changed. For, finally, it is not a simple knowledge; it demands thought and the driving force of imagination for its apprehension; it thrusts into foundations of morality; its physical facts have a metaphysical significance. M. Duhamel does not insist upon these things, knowing that the honest mind cannot escape the truth which he disengages. And it may be that he had no annihilating intention when he wrote, apostrophising those to whom his book is especially addressed:

Vous tous, Messieurs, qui vous réunissez pour parler des causes de la guerre, de la fin de la guerre, de l'usure des effectifs et des bases de la société future, excusez-moi de ne point vous donner mon opinion sur ces graves questions; je suis vraiment trop occupé par la plaie de ce malheureux Grégoire.

Elle n'est pas satisfaisante, cette plaie, et quand je la regarde, je ne peux plus penser à autre chose: les cris du blessé m'empêcheraient d'envisager assez tranquillement avec vous les conditions de la grande bataille et les résultats d'un remaniement de la carte d'Europe.

June, 1917.

THE DAUGHTER OF NECESSITY

THE Socrates of Plato, in the tenth book of his "Republic," dismissed the artist as one who, copying a copy of the eternal idea, appealed to the baser part of the soul. But the parting was too grievous for him to suffer it to be of long duration. In a little while he summoned back the artist to tell in a parable the rewards which await the human soul single in pursuit of truth, and to record the calm, inevitable voice of the daughter of Necessity, to hear which is the highest among them.

The double-edged sentence of Plato stands. There is small room in the economy of the soul for the art which is renegade to its true intention, which is to be the pure and clear-sounding trumpet of the voice of the daughter

of Necessity. If art is less than this, it had best be shut without the gates of the city. If it is this, or if it is tense with the strain after this condition, then there is no exercise of the human soul but must acknowledge art for its great exemplar and archetype. Philosophy and science seek the truth ; but at the moment that they apprehend it, they become art. For the moment comes when knowledge has no more help to give, when all the roads are mapped and all the mountains measured, and there is lacking only that sudden plenary vision to which alone the inevitable unity of discrepant and hostile particulars is plain. That vision, whether it is the consummation of science or philosophy or painting or poetry, is one. The consolidation of knowledge and certainty, the sense that apprehension has suddenly passed from a grosser to a purer world, the conviction that the angle of the mind's vision has in a second been not violently but inevitably changed—these are true signs of art. Old truths fall naturally into perspective ; they

are true still, but differently true; they are bathed in the light of Necessity.

Art is the pinnacle of the soul's exercise, the only road to the soul's acceptance of its true condition, infinitesimal and all-embracing. It seeks no purpose, demands no glorious destiny, shrinks from no evil, is not chilled by the death of the universe; no despair can cast it down, neither can joy lift it out of the sight of the things that are; it does not cry that pain shall be called good or seek a path to salvation by suffering. Experience holds nothing that it will deny. The beauty of true art is identical with truth. It is more than this; it is the only statement of the truth. Therefore it is almost as hard to understand as it is to create true art; and just as there is but one way to become a true artist—to have felt the necessity of devoting this short life of ours to the attempt to be one—so the only way to understand true art is to have been compelled to do so, not by the mode of the moment, but by an inward necessity. That necessity will be felt

only by those who, contemplating a work of true art, are, however dimly, conscious that a beauty does exist whose grave and solemn light is death to the unessential artifice which makes a pretty copy of a pretty thing, or exactly imitates an ugly one.

The present generation is afraid of the word beauty, with a fear born of unworthy motives. There are worthy reasons to fear the word; and there is also a just pride which comes to those who use it unafraid, knowing what potencies lie within it. To the beauty after which true art strives there is no antithesis which can be imagined by the mind of man. It is final and inevitable, as must be the vision when the veil is lifted from the face of the daughter of Necessity. Neither is there any antithesis to the truth of which this beauty is the only vehicle, for nothing can co-exist with it. It must be either included or dissipated into nothingness. And as the austere self-sufficiency of this beauty repels those epithets of beauty and ugliness which are valid only in

lower kingdoms where art has not yet begun to be, so the contemplation of it is not described, but falsified by terms of pleasure and pain. Plato did not say that the music of the heavenly spheres, which Er, the Armenian, was privileged to hear, was beautiful or sweet; he said only that "there was a single harmony."

Art is, therefore, at once the most human and the most inhuman thing we know. It is the most inhuman because its beauty is indifferent. It annihilates all standards and all aspirations but its own (and it may be that in the last encounter it annihilates even them). Our universe of hopes and fears is but one changing facet of the great clear-shining jewel which the artist alone sees face to face, and we in his mirror. It is also the most human, for the artist is a sacrifice to the dumb aspiration of the world. In him the age-long effort of life towards a final peace resting upon a sure foundation is made conscious and consuming, and it is his destiny alone to know that the truth

towards whose beauty he is inevitably driven is such that in its sight mankind is like a little child which would make its unknown human by endearing words.

The artist does not impose forms upon the world, nor does he, as he comes to be more singly what he is by intention, so much create as discover and reveal them in the world. By the compelling rhythm of his own progress he becomes more and more a vehicle of the spirit which is for ever wrestling with its own materiality. The poet listens in the tumult for the voice of Necessity; the painter waits upon the moment when her mighty outline is visible through the folds of her earthly garment. As the poet is greatest when he but helps life to utterance, so is the painter truest when he but guides the world to the achievement of its own design. He penetrates and seeks to identify himself with this timeless progress in order that he may become, as it were, the taproot of the spirit which is at work in the world he contemplates. He guides and is guided. To

guide he needs all the knowledge that comes of an incessant criticism, a perpetual revaluation of all his experience; to be guided he needs all the humility which that knowledge alone can bring. He who was proud and sought to dictate to life, finds a more secret, yet a stronger pride in subduing himself wholly to that in which he works.

In other words, there is a moment in the progress of the artist when he must pass finally and for all from the negative to the positive condition. He may, nay, he must, have followed his spirit where it listed. He has tried each single one of his faculties in isolation to its limit, only to discover that no part of himself will, of itself, conduct him to the goal. And, more than this, he has discovered that the full perfection of the part can be found only in its subordination to the whole; that each part is a means to an end beyond itself, and has meaning and perfection only in relation to that end. At that moment more than any other it is clear to him that all that

he has done is no more than to sharpen his weapons and train his hand and eye. He has broken down the last of the walls which shut him off from the free field of endeavour. Now, he must begin the fight and the race. Now he, who stood apart, must begin to comprehend—to comprehend and be comprehended. All that has gone before, deliberate and conscious though it was, has been only the long preparation of himself as a more perfect instrument of life. The hand that was the painter's own is become the hand of life, and the voice which was the poet's own is become the voice of the world.

The true creation of art begins thus with the complete assertion of surrender. The artist is aware that he is no longer fighting against the world, as he believed, but fighting for it, and fighting foremost in the foremost rank. He is reintegrated into that from which he was born; but he returns, not as the prodigal son to a beatitude which he ought never to have forsaken, but as one for whom the

wandering years have been a time of probation, without which he could never have known how great is the office he is called to fill in his father's house. He went out blind, he returns with sight; so that he comprehends the necessity which drove him forth and compels him to return. While he was in the wilderness he believed that his purpose was that he should express himself. At the moment when his steps turn homewards he has realised that his purpose is that life should be expressed through him. He is become the finger of the hand of Necessity.

March, 1918.

THE GREAT HALLUCINATION

THOSE who read—and none who read can fail to remember—"La Vie des Martyrs" will not hesitate to discern in the author of "Civilisation"* a French writer who has more subtly endeared himself to them than any who have written since the war began. Here is one who will not suffer us to elude the question which we must answer under pain of loss of our humanity. Once more he awakens us from the apathy into which we sink to live, and sets us to the old heart-searching again. What shall we say then? Civilisation, 1914-1917?

Il n'y a rien de plus offensant pour l'âme ni de plus douloureux que d'entendre délirer et souffrir ces hommes blessés au cerveau, ou encore de voir un adolescent de

* "Civilisation, 1914-1917," par Denis Thévenin.

vingt ans se gâter, se souiller comme un vieillard. Que de fois, en me consumant devant ces spectacles honteux, j'ai souhaité que l'on admît à les contempler ceux qui tiennent dans leurs mains les destinées des peuples. Mais, laissons cela, hélas. On ne prétera pas d'imagination à ceux qui n'en ont guère. . . .

"A human being," cried the author of "La Vie des Martyrs," "suffers always in his flesh alone, and that is why war is possible." That despair-haunted sentence has given way to another: "One cannot lend imagination to those who have it not." They seem almost to be the same; but the difference between them is terrible. It is a yawning gulf in which the little light of human sanity is swallowed up quick, for the way of madness leads from a half-truth to a whole. There was a grain of comfort in the old conclusion. The assertion that pain was incommunicable had in it an element of iron necessity which, if it chilled the soul, could also steel it. Even though every page of "La Vie des Martyrs" was a graven proof that pain was communicable, one might grasp at the anodyne. But now M. Thévenin will

not allow us to shirk the truth any more; it is that some few have the imagination to understand and suffer another's pain, while to the majority of mankind this is denied.

One broods and broods, but there is no escape. Over a pale and fevered few the curse of understanding hangs like a thundercloud that will never move so long as they live. It is not true that all men have understanding, and that they steel their hearts to the suffering of a struggle for a greater good. The things which are told in this book are such that no heart could steel itself against them. What is true is that most hearts are steel, for what but steel could resist the barb of the story of Revaud in the hospital:

> Je suis sûre que vous pourriez vous retenir, Revaud, voyez quel travail! Mais tout à coup, saisi de honte et d'une sorte de désespoir, le blessé gémissait:
>
> Madame Baugan, faut pas m'en vouloir: j'étais pas comme ça dans le civil.

As we copy these lines and wonder whether such flashes of revelation of suffering will not be thought too painful or too crude, or even

too unpleasant, the thought presents itself that perhaps the imagination is there but those who have it are afraid to use it. It may be that there is some saving impulse of dishonesty, some instinct that the truth is intolerable and therefore must not be regarded face to face, which preserves the human spirit from disaster.

M. Thévenin points with his title straight at the paradox. It is in the word "civilisation"; for that is the name which we give to the long process which has culminated in the consciousness which can imagine and suffer and find intolerable the pain of another; yet under the guidance of this same consciousness have been created the means and the possibility to inflict pain of a kind and extent undreamed of. Therefore what has been called the bankruptcy of civilisation is, more exactly, the failure of a mode of consciousness. Consciousness has outrun life. It has created for itself finer reactions and more exquisite inhibitions than can be tolerated by the life of which it seemed to be the culmination. The splendid flower of

the sensitive plant is too heavy for the stem, for the sap runs elsewhere now and is turned to viler uses. And in that epithet, vile, which will not be denied, the pathetic fallacy is but the more apparent. It is a last despairing cry of the mind which cannot abandon its own ideal. Though consciousness should be proved a thousand times a dream, it will proclaim with its latest breath that it and it alone is real. It has no choice; but it needs to have the full courage of its choice. If it still claims for itself validity, then the life in which infinite suffering, deliberately inflicted, has the pre-eminence must be declared a dream, for this mind and this matter cannot co-exist. Each denies the other. And though we are not yet aware that this more desperate battle is being fought to a final issue, the signs are not wanting. Imperceptibly the world of men is being divided. On the one side stand those who have come unconsciously to hold this life of organised suffering a dream: on the other are those who treat the consciousness which

they once affected to regard as supreme, whose self-created standards they made as if to obey, as a scarce-remembered memory. To these the past, to those the present, insensibly becomes an hallucination.

To M. Thévenin the present is an hallucination. He does not write as though it were, and perhaps he does not even know that he believes it is. He does a thing far more terrible. He puts down, with the simple honesty which is the final perfection of art, the reality as it is before him. Among the things he sees, the words he hears, he is able to discern the true from the false; he has and needs no other artifice. Yet that which he so directly records is an hallucination. It has the exact and unmistakable quality of a dream, for the mind in the same moment accepts and refuses it as real. And this effect is more terrible because M. Thévenin does not deliberately aim at achieving it. The life of suffering is spread before us, full of familiar things. We can touch the walls of the hospital with our

fingers if we would, and look out of its windows with our bodily eyes. But in this concrete scene which unfolds before us there are tiny, almost invisible, chasms, which are the souls of men in pain suddenly gathered up into an unforgettable phrase. Often we pass over the chasms from one firm rock to another and do not look down; only at a later moment does it flash into our minds that if we had looked down we should have seen things unspeakable. While we are still doubting, the moment comes when the suffering soul seems to utter a word that is and is not. A phrase looms up whose meaning is out of all relation to its actual words, ridiculous and terrible, and we are engulfed and lost in an abyss of pain.

This was the method of "La Vie des Martyrs"; and it is the method of the greater part of "Civilisation, 1914-1917," though even in this part there are significant differences. In the former book the martyrs were all conscious of their martyrdom, but now M. Thévenin turns us deliberately towards men whose

wounds are such that their rational part is completely swept away. He does this, we feel, with an instinctive determination to confront us with the most material aspect of pain. One cannot, indeed, lend imagination to those who have it not, but if they have eyes to see they shall at least be made to see. Moreover, in "Civilisation" he includes stories which have at first sight no direct relation to his obsessing theme. There are stories almost comic: "Un Enterrement," a dispute between a Catholic chaplain and a Rabbi over the body of a dead officer; "Discipline," the immediate submission of a whole hospital staff of rebellious princes of surgery before a "Mossinspecteurjral," whom they despise; "Régulatrice," a story of the body of a man who dies where no one is allowed to die; and "Le Cuirassier Cuvelier," the adventures of another body whose identification marks have been lost. But what might seem to be comedy in them is satire, and worse, satire without anger. All of them tell of the prostration of the living

human consciousness beneath the Juggernaut of the machine, the victory of the discipline which compels some to exist and enables others to live without consciousness or imagination. M. Thévenin seems at this point to be seeking an escape from his own dilemma. Besides those who have imagination and those who have it not are those to whose imagination discipline is an opiate. But whether he believes that the way of escape which he suggests is more than a *cul de sac* we cannot say, for who can say whether an imagination that is deadened remains imagination still?

The vision of "Civilisation," which is the epilogue of the book, leaves little hope. One cannot quote from the exact and unflinching picture of a travelling hospital which it contains; the quality would be lost; the sustained sense of hallucination would be weakened, if it did not wholly disappear; while to copy those fragments in which the nightmare horror is so concentrated as to be unmistakable even in isolation would be merely to

frighten readers away from the whole. But here is the conclusion:

Le monde me semblait confus, incohérent et malheureux; et j'estime qu'il est réellement ainsi. . . .

Croyez le bien, Monsieur, quand je parle avec pitié de la civilisation, je sais ce que je dis; et ce n'est pas le télégraphie sans fil qui me fera revenir sur mon opinion. C'est d'autant plus triste qu'il n'y a rien à faire; on ne remonte pas une pente comme celle sur laquelle roule désormais le monde. Et pourtant!

La civilisation, la vraie, j'y pense souvent. C'est dans mon esprit, comme un chœur de voix harmonieuses chantant un hymne, c'est une statue de marbre sur une colline desséchée, c'est un homme qui dirait: "Aimez-vous les uns les autres!" ou "Rendez le bien pour le mal!" Mais il y a près de deux mille ans qu'on ne fait plus que répéter ces choses-là, et les princes et les prêtres ont bien trop d'intérêts dans le siècle pour concevoir d'autres choses semblables.

On se trompe sur le bonheur et sur le bien. Les âmes les plus généreuses se trompent aussi, parce que le silence et la solitude leur sont trop souvent refusés. J'ai bien regardé l'autoclave monstrueux sur son trône. Je vous le dis, en vérité, la civilisation n'est pas dans cet objet, pas plus que dans les pinces brillantes dont se servait le chirurgien. La civilisation n'est pas dans toute cette pacotille terrible; et, si elle n'est pas dans le cœur de l'homme, eh bien, elle n'est nulle part.

"Civilisation, 1914-1917," is a book to which future generations will return with fear. It

will then be either, for the many, the record of the fevered nightmare from which a pale and weak but convalescent humanity shall have awakened, or, for the few, one of the last despairing protests of a mode of consciousness that has not survived the struggle for existence.

June, 1918.

MR. SASSOON'S WAR VERSES

It is the fact, not the poetry, of Mr. Sassoon that is important. When a man is in torment and cries aloud, his cry is incoherent. It has neither weight nor meaning of its own. It is inhuman, and its very inhumanity strikes to the nerve of our hearts. We long to silence the cry, whether by succour and sympathy, or by hiding ourselves from it. That it should somehow stop or be stopped, and by ceasing trouble our hearts no more, is our chief desire; for it is ugly and painful, and it rasps at the cords of nature.

Mr. Sassoon's verses*—they are not poetry—are such a cry. They touch not our imagination, but our sense. Reading them, we feel,

* "Counter-Attack and other Poems," by Siegfried Sassoon.

not as we do with true art, which is the evidence of a man's triumph over his experience. that something has after all been saved from disaster, but that everything is irremediably and intolerably wrong. And, God knows, something is wrong—wrong with Mr. Sassoon, wrong with the world which has made him the instrument of a discord so jangling. Why should one of the finest creatures of the earth be made to suffer a pain so brutal that he can give it no expression, that even this most human and mighty relief is denied him?

For these verses express nothing, save in so far as a cry expresses pain. Their effect is exhausted when the immediate impression dies away. Some of them are, by intention, realistic pictures of battle experience, and indeed one does not doubt their truth. The language is over-wrought, dense and turgid, as a man's mind must be under the stress and obsession of a chaos beyond all comprehension.

The place was rotten with dead; green clumsy legs,
High-booted, sprawled and grovelled along the saps;

And trunks, face downward, in the sucking mud,
Wallowed like trodden sand-bags loosely filled;
And naked sodden buttocks, mats of hair,
Bulged, clotted heads slept in the plastering slime.
And then the rain began—the jolly old rain!

That is horrible, but it does not produce the impression of horror. It numbs, not terrifies, the mind. Each separate reality and succeeding vision is, as it were, driven upon us by a hammer, but one hammer-beat is like another. Each adds to the sum more numbness and more pain, but the separateness and particularity of each is lost.

Bullets spat
And he remembered his rifle . . . rapid fire . . .
And started blazing wildly . . . then a bang
Crumpled and spun him sideways, knocked him out
To grunt and wriggle: none heeded him: he choked
And fought the flapping veils of smothering gloom,
Lost in a blurred confusion of yells and groans. . . .

We are given the blurred confusion, and just because this is the truth of the matter exactly rendered we cannot apprehend it any more than the soldier who endures it can. We, like him, are "crumpled and spun sideways."

There is a value in the direct transcription of plain, unvarnished fact; but there is another truth more valuable still. One may convey the chaos of immediate sensation by a chaotic expression, as does Mr. Sassoon. But the unforgettable horror of an inhuman experience can only be rightly rendered by rendering also its relation to the harmony and calm of the soul which it shatters. In this context alone can it appear with that sudden shock to the imagination which is overwhelming. The faintest discord in a harmony has within it an infinity of disaster, which no confusion of notes, however wild and various and loud, can possibly suggest. It is on this that the wise saying that poetry is emotion recollected in tranquillity is so firmly based, for the quality of an experience can only be given by reference to the ideal condition of the human consciousness which it disturbs with pleasure or with pain. But in Mr. Sassoon's verses it is we who are left to create for ourselves the harmony of which he gives us only the

moment of its annihilation. It is we who must be the poets and the artists if anything enduring is to be made of his work. He gives us only the data. There is, indeed, little enough harm in this; it is good that we should have the data; it is good that Mr. Sassoon should have written his book, and that the world should read it. But our concern here is with Mr. Sassoon the potential poet.

There is a danger that work such as his may pass current as poetry. It has the element of poetical popularity, for it produces an immediate impression. And since Mr. Sassoon is a young man, he may be hypnotised by popularity into believing that his work is done, and may end by wrecking the real poetic gift which at rare intervals peeps out in a line.

> The land where all
> Is ruin and nothing blossoms but the sky.

The last five words are beautiful because they do convey horror to the imagination, and do not bludgeon the senses. They convey horror to the imagination precisely because they

contain, as it were, a full octave of emotional experience, and the compass ranges from serenity to desolation, not merely of the earth, but of the mind. The horror is in relation; it is placed, and therefore created. But in the following lines there is no trace of creation or significance:

> A yawning soldier knelt against the bank,
> Staring across the morning blear with fog;
> He wondered when the Allemands would get busy;
> And then, of course, they started with five-nines
> Traversing, sure as fate and never a dud.

We choose these lines because they make a tolerable, if not a very discriminating, prose. Those who follow them in the piece which gives the book its name are more extravagant journalese. But why should such middling prose be ironed out into nominal blank verse lines, unless Mr. Sassoon imagined that he was, in fact, writing poetry? What he was doing was to make a barely sufficient entry in a log-book. If the lines of the whole piece were transposed into the prose form for which they clamour, they would then, surely, appear

to be the rough notes (perhaps for a novel, much less probably for a poem) which they are.

Mr. Sassoon is evidently in some sense aware that an element of creation, or of art, is lacking in his work. Perhaps, on reading some of his own lines, he may have felt that they were not, after all, a new kind of poetry; and he may have been sensible of some inexplicable difference between his own verses and those of Mr. Thomas Hardy, which are a new kind of poetry. For we think we can detect a certain straining after pregnant compression, due to the attempt to catch Mr. Hardy's method. The overloading of epithet and verb in such a line as—

He winked his prying torch with patching glare

imitates the technical accidents of a poetical method, of which the real strength and newness consists exactly in the element which as yet has found only an insignificant place in Mr. Sassoon's mental composition. Against the permanence of the philosophic background

in Mr. Hardy's work, each delicate shade of direct emotion is conveyed with all the force that comes of complete differentiation. With Mr. Sassoon there is no background, no differentiation; he has no calm, therefore he conveys no terror; he has no harmony, therefore he cannot pierce us with the anguish of discord.

The one artistic method which he employs is the irony of epigram. On these occasions alone does he appeal to a time beyond the immediate present of sensation. There is an effort at comparison and relation, or, in other words, an effort to grapple with his own experience and comprehend it. It is true that the effort and the comprehension do not go very far, and they achieve rather a device of technique than a method of real expression; but the device is effective enough.

"Good morning; good morning!" the General said,
When we met him last week on our way to the line.
Now the soldiers he smiled at are most of 'em dead,
And we're cursing his staff for incompetent swine.

"He's a cheery old card," grunted Harry to Jack,
As they slogged up to Arras with rifle and pack.

* * * * *

But he did for them both by his plan of attack.

The comprehension is superficial, however. The experiences of battle, awful, inhuman, and intolerable as they are, can be comprehended only by the mind which is capable of bringing their horror and their inhumanity home to the imagination of others. Without the perspective that comes from intellectual remoteness there can be no comprehension, no order and no art. Intellectual remoteness is not cold or callous; it is the condition in which a mind works as a mind, and a man is fully active as a man. Because this is wanting in Mr. Sassoon we are a prey to uneasiness when confronted with his work. We have a feeling of guilt, as though we were prying into secrets which were better hid. We have read, for instance, in the pages of M. Duhamel, far more terrible things than any Mr. Sassoon has to tell, but they were made terrible by the calm of the

recording mind. Mr. Sassoon's mind is a chaos. It is as though he had no memory, and the thing itself returned as it was. That is why the fact, or the spectacle, of Mr. Sassoon is so much more impressive than his verses. That one who asked for perfect happiness so little of life as the writer of "Break of Day"—

> Unlatch the gate
> And set Golumpus going on the grass

should be reduced to a condition in which he cannot surmount the disaster of his own experience—

> Thud, thud, thud—quite soft . . . they never cease
> Those whispering guns—O Christ! I want to go out
> And screech at them to stop—I'm going crazy,
> I'm going stark, staring mad because of the guns.

—that is awful and inhuman and intolerable. And to that it makes no difference that it is Mr. Sassoon who is the martyr, and we ourselves who are the poets.

July, 1918.

REALISM

THERE are those who say that there is no such thing as realism. In literature—so runs the argument—in philosophy, in painting, and in politics, each man seeks to grapple with the real, but grasps after a shadow, for he touches only that which is real to him. Idealism is, therefore, as much a philosophy of the real as anything which may strive to create a monopoly by arrogating to itself the name of Realism. The crucial question is, What is the real? And probably as good an answer as any is that it is something which inevitably escapes from the hands of those who imagine that they hold it. The Germans have for a generation been prone to believe that they have a unique knowledge and control of the real. In *real* schools they learned to admire *real* policy and demand *real* guarantees; a

grim four years' experience has taught them that the imponderables weigh at least as heavy in the scale of reality as the ponderables. Likewise in art it is coming to be generally acknowledged that those who have most emphatically claimed the title of realists are for the most part those who produce the very scantiest illusion of reality. Realists of all kinds, in short, justify their claim to the title they assume about as much as the "plain man" who proves on examination to be a thoroughly unpleasant mixture of stupidity, vanity, hypocrisy, and complicated inhibitions.

Nevertheless, we must take it that the term "realism" has come to stay. Since we have to put up with its company, it behoves us to do our best to make it a useful member of society. And this is precisely what Mr. McDowall* has exerted himself to do. He desires—and our most active sympathy goes with his desire—to attach some definite meaning to a current term of criticism which, if it

* "Realism," by Arthur McDowall (Constable).

be suffered to go much longer undefined, will carry confusion wherever it enters. For him, therefore, the question is not, What does realism mean? since it is obviously made to mean anything and everything, but, What ought realism to mean, if it is to be a conception of any value? The field of his inquiry is in the main æsthetic and, primarily, literary. On this ground the biggest battles have been fought, and on it there is most chance of retrieving something valuable from the *débris*.

It is remarkable that in the half-century or so since the term came into currency artists of moment have resisted the attempt to dub them realists. Flaubert was very positive in denying that he was one, and Dostoevsky was at great pains to make it clear that what he called realism was something which no one else would have dreamed of calling by that name. The immediate motives of the protests were very different; the underlying impulse was the same. Both felt that realistic art verged perilously on commonplace art, which

is not art at all. Both knew that the attempt to define art through its raw material was futile, and that everything depended upon the way the material was treated. Both agreed that if realism meant a commonplace record of commonplace fact, then they were not realists. Yet, seeing that anything beyond this implied an individual conception of what is real, it seemed to follow that if realism was to mean anything it would have to mean so many different things that it could hardly be advantageous to include them all in a single word.

The difficulty of an inquiry into the nature of literary realism is thus early apparent. If we begin by attempting to elucidate the element that is common to various examples of realistic literature, we are faced with the fact that the artists themselves—who, though they are not, indeed, the final arbiters, have a right to be heard—repel the classification. We can but take our courage in both hands and essay a description. This is what Mr. McDowall does, in these words :

We have tried to fill out the notion of realism as a form of art which represents the actual world in such a way as to give a heightened sense of it; an impersonal art, subduing idiosyncrasy to the theme it works in, and yet having, when it is successful, that individual accent by which great art is known.

The crucial point of this suggestion lies in "the giving of a heightened sense" of the real world. Leaving aside for the moment the vital question in what this "heightened sense" consists, we are confronted with another to which we think Mr. McDowall is inclined to give something less than its real weight. No person who is honest with himself will cavil at the actual terms of the description of realism, or deny that that which they describe is art. The doubt will be whether they do not cover forms of art which the author would himself exclude from the province of true realism. For instance, Mr. Hardy's novels are not for Mr. McDowall genuinely realistic, for they have a metaphysical background, a *parti pris* in their view of life, which deprives them of the necessary impersonality. So far,

indeed, the definition might be successfully maintained; but it is leading straight to a dilemma. On the one hand, by the exclusion of such forms of art as Mr. Hardy's novels, the description and realism itself are in imminent danger of being emasculated; on the other hand, in order to retain a content for them, recourse must be had to inclusions as arbitrary as the exclusion of Mr. Hardy is logical. Mr. McDowall is arbitrary—how arbitrary has been concealed from himself by the fact that he discusses this essential problem at wide intervals in his book. Mr. Hardy is rejected in one chapter and Dostoevsky included in another. Had they presented themselves at the gate together, we suspect that the verdict of the doorkeeper would have fallen against them both.

In other words, may it not be that the "heightened sense" of the real world which realism must produce in order that it may be art (and not the pseudo-science of a Zola) depends directly upon the increasing emphasis

given to the personal idiosyncrasy of the artist, not upon the subduing of it? Certainly the personal idiosyncrasy does not include mere likes and dislikes. The ephemeral reactions of petty personalities are invalid. But the reactions which are at once personal and fundamental, the angle from which the artist is driven to view life in order that it may seem a whole to him, the *Weltanschauung* to which consciously or unconsciously he is ever returning—are not these the very elements from which the "heightened sense" of the real world is derived? Dostoevsky's vision of life as the struggle of the human soul for utter and complete mastery of his destiny, with victory achieved in its own self-willed annihilation; Tchehov's sense of the hopeless, indescribable beauty of the infinitely weary pattern —a beauty absolute and valid in its own right; Mr. Hardy's conviction of ruthless and evil fate turning all aspiration to nothingness; Tolstoy's deep-taken earth-breath and his identification of himself with the physical

creativeness of life ; Flaubert's puzzled mixture of hatred and fascination before the real existence of imperfect things—is it not precisely the absorbing vehemence with which these artists have wrested these conclusions from their contemplation of the real world which gives to their work the "heightened sense" of reality and makes them artists? Yet how are some realists rather than others?

As we have said, we think that Mr. McDowall has been precluded by the necessities of his own train of thought from addressing himself to this question with sufficient directness. Yet it is intimately relevant to the whole inquiry. If these great men are all realists, then their common quality lies rather in the tyranny of the passion which compels them to contemplate life, to understand it, to make it one and to demonstrate its oneness. The division between realistic and any other kind of art falls to the ground. The representation of the real world is only a means of articulating the expression of a deep conviction

of soul, which may, as time goes on, sometimes give way to other means of expression, as Mr. Hardy turns to poetry and as Dostoevsky turned to the pregnant dream story and Tolstoy to the fable. The great novels of these great novelists would then be seen to belong to the same order of art as great poetry and drama. "King Lear" and "Antony and Cleopatra," the induction to "Hyperion," "Adonais," "The Excursion," "The Cherry Orchard," "War and Peace," and "The Possessed" would be the creations of a kindred impulse taking shape according to the articulation of the age.

To this it may be objected, and rightly objected, that such wholesale simplification is not permissible. The fact of realistic art remains, and with it the question what it is. But the possibility of the simplification suggests that the weakness of realism as a term of criticism is most apparent when it claims as within its province all those works of art which deal with the real world. Its kingdom

should surely be far more narrowly defined, if it is not to exercise merely a shadowy and unreal *imperium* over the whole world of art. A sharp line should be drawn, we believe, between the preoccupation of literary art with the fact and with the problem of life. There is the joy of seeing for seeing's sake, and the subtler, more perplexing delight of contemplation; and the deep, but by no means obvious, distinction between vision and apprehension should be maintained in the language of criticism. The presuppositions implicit in the two activities are fundamentally different, though each may fairly lay claim to be a metaphysical background. Where vision alone satisfies—and this is realistic art—the implication is that the external world has in itself by inherent right the structure of a work of art. The articulation of the real is self-sufficient, its obvious inter-relation adequate. A clear vision of the particular is all that is necessary; the union, the harmony, and the rhythm will emerge of themselves. When

Flaubert writes, "Extract poetry from anything you please; it lies in everything and everywhere," his precept sounds oddly like Wordsworth's, but his intention is leagues asunder. To have seen a thing in and for itself, and to have expressed the vision in the only word, was to him to have discovered poetry or to have created art. Flaubert was right. An intense vision of particulars is as surely art as the mechanical, unrevealing copying of the actual is not.

Fundamental to Flaubert's theory and practice was an instinctive conviction of the complete individuality of everything in the external world. No two persons or two things were alike; and the function of the artist was to apprehend each object by its individuality. This was the purpose of that prodigious search for "the only word" with which Flaubert wore out his laborious days. By its aid alone could he record the lineaments of the real. He did not trouble about general truth or a larger rhythm. If they existed, then

they would be found, without the need of any special emphasis from the artist, in the perfect copy which he made. They could be left to take care of themselves if only the individuality of the individual thing were captured. Half by impulse, half by determined will, Flaubert managed to look upon the etiolated world with the eyes of Adam, and the essence of his artistic activity was that he named things anew.

But Flaubert's "plastic realism" was a thing apart. As a theory and a practice of the art of literature it was to remain practically isolated. Its influence was due to the fact that it made a sufficient philosophy of a technical method which might serve others to express far different philosophies; for the method of "the only word" was as an apt instrument in the service of a personal vision of the world as in that of Flaubert's impassive objectivity. But realism as a method is utterly different from realism as a kind of art. As a method it can be employed to

embody imaginations more wildly and fantastically remote from common experience than any romance. Dostoevsky, for instance, never fails to use the realistic method; and he placed it on record with satisfaction that a simple-minded Russian alienist guaranteed the scientific correctness of Ivan Karamazov's dream. But he used the method to work out, as it were, in the concrete, a conception of life and the external world not only widely different from that of common sense, but in diametrical opposition to it. So far as the substance of his work was concerned, he is the direct antithesis of a realist.

To us, therefore, Mr. McDowall seems to go much farther than the facts of his case will warrant when he includes the realism of Flaubert and the realism, say, of the great Russians in a single æsthetic kind. The difference between realism proper and the employment of the realistic technique is, we believe, fundamental, though each may claim a part in creation of art. Moreover, the difference corresponds to a deep and vital

difference of attitude. The true realist is, like Flaubert, an Adam newly born, opening his eyes to the infinite variety of the created universe.

But there is another kind of art which, though it deals with the real world, vision alone does not satisfy. Rather vision reveals to it the absence of a more profound and necessary relation, to discover which is the search which henceforward torments the artist's soul. He is for ever shifting his ground to find a point from which he may see life and himself as one, and from which he may include all things within his vision. As he approaches this condition that which began to all seeming as vision changes its nature and becomes contemplation and apprehension. Death interrupts him before the unattainable goal is ever reached, but it leaves him and us with the sense of having been poised on the brink of final revelation. It is thus inherent in the nature of this art that it should move, if not obviously from strength to strength, certainly from less to greater scope. But the rhythm of the true realist cannot

grow larger, for it is given and fixed from the beginning. His only progress can be in the perfection of style, which is indeed no mean or purely "stylistic" perfection, since it consists in the more complete capture of the particularity of the real. But the scope and sweep of the work are not changed. "L'Education Sentimentale" marks no real advance on "Madame Bovary." And perhaps the cause of the unsatisfactory achievement of the Georgian generation, which Mr. McDowall examines with the scrupulous generosity characteristic of his whole inquiry, is that it has not patience enough to be realist in the exact sense nor seriousness enough to be artist in the larger.

It is at this point that the inquiry into the nature of realism, academic though it may seem to the casual glance, touches the present generation to the quick. Somehow we have to find the secret, to make the new synthesis. It was Mr. Wells who urged us to it in the years before the war; nor will it be forgotten that he first and most courageously attempted

to make it during the war. But as Mr. Wells is an index, but not a leader of his age, his synthesis is a measure but not a satisfaction of our need. The need is great. In a suggestive final chapter Mr. McDowall touches the fringe, but shrinks to lift the veil. Yet we must be honest; we must acknowledge that, judged by its literature and its art before and during the war, the contemporary mind has proved itself inadequate to the real—worse, careless of the real. This is indeed not the form in which the truth is generally graven upon our hearts. It is concealed for the most part in phrases whose cogency we admit in haste in order that we may not be too deeply pierced by the barb which they hide within themselves. "The bankruptcy of civilisation" contains untold potencies of disquietude, and even "the war to end war" is by no means as millennial as it seems. The confession of impotence which lurks in the one hardly affords a sure foundation for the optimism of the other. After a moment's reflection the affectation of purposeful control over a process recognised as

uncontrollable only confirms the sense of our suddenly proven inadequacy. We are reeds shaken by the wind. Though we indulge our pride and claim that we are men of goodwill, turned to derision by the rushing, mighty event, our voice drops to a childish whisper in the hurricane about us.

In the dark and stormy night we ask ourselves by what malign destiny we were lifted into the cloudland of our unconscious optimism. Why did we believe that our civilisation and our system of ideals exercised a real dominion over the real? Why, when we so securely projected ourselves and our dreams out into the unknown familiar world, did the contradiction not strike us dumb? Were we cowards who turned our faces from the truth, or have our eyes been so sternly fixed upon it that we have wandered into a nightmare of illusion? Perhaps even our late questions are wrongly put. Perhaps our despair is felt at a dilemma of our own creation, and our task and the task of the future is not to decide on which side of the gulf that divides our proved illusion from

the proving fact lies the kingdom of the real, but to accept them both, knowing that, although no reconciliation between them on their own level is possible, each can claim an equal measure of reality. But to this strange world, where ideal and fact sneer at each other, we are still more inadequate. How can we who have weakly taken the easy side in the struggle purify ourselves of the partisanship, which has crept into us by reason of our spiritual sloth, and seek to comprehend the nature of the whole of which we are such infinitely small, war-waging parts? What new discipline, what undreamed of martyrdom will now be demanded of us? What if we, who have felt the pain of watching the ideals which seemed to be part of our very souls trampled underfoot, are now required to find the secret road to the knowledge that it could not have been otherwise, that it was better so, and even that to such contemplation our own utter discomfiture is beautiful?

October, 1918.

THE GULF BETWEEN

THERE has of late been much talk of Victorians, and though we have been amused by it, we are perhaps not much the wiser. This generation had forgotten their existence, and has responded with hardly more than an incredulous smile for the monsters revealed to it by the patiently cynical showmanship of Mr. Lytton Strachey. Mrs. Humphry Ward* (who is very angry with Mr. Strachey) is a link with this fabulous past. At least, she would be a link if we could be sure that she had any secure attachment to our side of the chain. Perhaps the relation would be more truly expressed if we should say that we have no need of a telescope to study her.

Yet in all save time she is as remote as the

* "A Writer's Recollections," by Mrs. Humphry Ward.

polar star, as remote, as indifferent, and as cold. We do not understand her. Whether the fault is hers or ours, who can say? The most that we can do is to try to define the insurmountable barrier which divides us. Why is it that the interest she arouses in us by her recollections is so dispassionate and chill, and that an excitement begins to kindle only when our inquiry becomes objective, as it were scientific, and we are impatient to know the reason why we are utterly unmoved? Can it be that Mrs. Humphry Ward is a commonplace writer; or rather, can it be only that?

The answer is far too easy. Even though we do believe that Mrs. Humphry Ward is a commonplace writer, the quality of commonplace which we find in her is to be found in all her contemporaries. Even in those of far greater intellectual distinction than she, its presence cannot be denied. Matthew Arnold is infected by it, and one who was far more thoroughly armed against its miasma than Matthew Arnold—namely, Samuel Butler—is

by no means immune. We feel that even their rebellion is decorous, and that in the struggle with the Evil One himself they would remain gentlemen. Though they might break down all barriers, one would always remain—the insuperable distinction between gentlemen and other creatures. But that is an almost ridiculous narrowing of the issue. The alien quality which we are seeking to define, it seems in vain, is more subtle and more pervasive than this. We have the sense that somehow in the Victorian intellect everything was falsely simplified. We know there were great struggles heroically fought, but they seem to us to be unreal because, to our present vision, what united the disputants was much more important than what divided them. Therefore the story of their struggles reads to us more like an elaborate comedy than the tragedy which, as we must believe, it really was. We can hardly realise that they were unconscious of their fundamental community, and their controversies appear like play-acting.

Here we approach the essence of the matter. It becomes obvious why Mrs. Humphry Ward, though at the first glance she seems to be a link between the Victorian Age and our own, should subsequently appear to be the embodiment of the remoter age. The novels by which she attained her reputation are merely elaborate chronicles of those spiritual struggles which now appear to us to be storms in a teacup. She is still convinced that they are vastly important. A great deal of her book of recollections consists of the history of the composition of "Robert Elsmere" and "David Grieve"; and the result is that we find the whole faintly preposterous. The sense of proportion is so utterly different from our own, the values have so changed, that we find ourselves a million times more remote from the thoughts of Mrs. Humphry Ward than we are from those of any one of a dozen ancient Chinese poets in Mr. Waley's recent volume.

It is not that we consider ourselves bigger

than our fathers. We will gladly admit that there were giants in those days. But we are different, and we must insist on the difference. In comparison with them we are unstable as water, and it is easy to see from her summary survey of what has followed her in thought and art that Mrs. Humphry Ward is persuaded that we do not excel. We are, in truth, insecure :

> We look before and after,
> And pine for what is not.

We find our spokesmen in the poet who wrote those lines and his contemporaries. After them there is a gap in our spiritual history, and not till Thomas Hardy, who struggled against and vanquished the complacency of an intervening age, do we find one whom we can revere without a tinge of mockery in our devotion. With him the sense of mystery and the knowledge of uncertainty returns. It is not that we are romantics ; we are only seekers after the truth. But we know that the very elements of the truth are that life is not simple,

and that if there is to be any common acceptance of fact between the disputants, the fact accepted must be as ugly as it is.

In this spirit we wonder, as we read her Recollections, whether Mrs. Humphry Ward ever pondered the implications of some remarkable words once spoken to her by Walter Pater:

> In my ardent years of exploration and revolt, conditioned by the historical work that occupied me during the later seventies, I once said to him in a *tête-à-tête*, reckoning confidently on his sympathy, and with the intolerance and certainty of youth, that orthodoxy could not possibly maintain itself long against its assailants, especially from the historical and literary camps, and that we should live to see it break down. He shook his head, and looked rather troubled, "I don't think so——" he said. Then, with hesitation: "And we don't altogether agree. You think it's all plain. But I can't. There are such mysterious things. Take that saying, 'Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden.' How can you explain that? There is a mystery in it—something supernatural."

These words were spoken many years before Mrs. Humphry Ward wrote "Robert Elsmere." Yet, if she had really known what they meant, the writing of that novel would

hardly have been possible. What has the paraphernalia of historical evidences to do with a spiritual need? The disputes between one Church and another are insignificant beside the desire of the human soul for the comfort of religion, and ridiculous in comparison with the nature of the reality which makes that refuge to be desired, and makes it for many as impossible as it is desirable. The Victorians seem only to have stirred the surface of their problems.

It is so inconceivably hard to be fair to them, so hard to believe that we have profited by their victories. For if they made head on our behalf against an intellectual tyranny, it was only to impose another—the tyranny of a threadbare social conception. They derided our provincialism, and more effectively cut us off from the world by planting the standard of "the English gentleman" upon the ramparts than centuries of robustious ignorance had done. They expounded France to us, and it was always somehow the wrong France, the

Anglicised solemnity of the "Revue des Deux Mondes" (concerning which Mrs. Ward reveals that it contemplated publishing "Robert Elsmere"!) instead of the epoch-making France of Flaubert. They taught the gospel of progress and social service, and yet they remained so ineffably superior that there are moments when it seems that a gospel of social hatred would have been better for us all. It would have cleared the air.

The absence of clear air and a clear vision in Mrs. Ward's Recollections bewilders us, and bewilders us the more because its absence is not immediately obvious. For the absence of distinction in a style lends it, for a little while at least, the appearance of limpidity. Only gradually we realise that we are seeing nothing, and that what we took for a transparent window is a pane of frosted glass.

In the vistas of her memory we see men as trees walking, vague outlines whose particularity is lost. The figures of the Oxford she knew, of Jowett and Mark Pattison, of Liddon

and Pusey, are shadows in her pages, looming shapes in a Victorian mist. The only man who is real is Walter Pater, and it is in spite of Mrs. Humphry Ward that we gain a glimpse of him ; to how great a degree in her despite is shown by the possible answer to his remark which she might have given "a few years later."

> A few years later I should very likely have replied that the answer of the modern critic would be : "The words you quote are in all probability from a lost wisdom-book ; there are very close analogies in Proverbs and in the Apocrypha. They are a fragment without context, and may represent on the Lord's lips either a quotation or the text of a discourse. Wisdom is speaking—the Wisdom 'which is justified of her children.'"

To do Mrs. Humphry Ward justice we admit that she discerns that "if anyone had made such a reply it would not have affected the mood in Pater of which this conversation gave me my first glimpse." But the thought that she could, in the coldness of blood that comes after many years, have contemplated making it is terrible to us. Perhaps we are hypersensitive ; perhaps it is right that

we children of doubt and hesitation should be disciplined by the firm hand of commonsense. But if ever a spell was broken by the sounding brass of confident mediocrity it is here. Listen to the silence, and listen to the voice. The faint echoes of a thousand shattered beatitudes throng about our ears, and among them we catch the words of the avenging angel: "It must needs be that offences come, but woe to him by whom the offence cometh."

But the angel does not avenge. He has visited the third and fourth generation. And to Mrs. Humphry Ward everything is plain, and from those to whom she speaks everything is hidden. A grey mist and booming, intolerable voices proclaiming certainty. . . . Yet for one delicate and incomprehensible moment a bright vision appears. For some reason Mrs. Ward drops something of her *ex cathedra* manner in dealing with the women she knew, and she gives us, if not an understanding, at least a picture of the rare lady who was Mark Pattison's wife and subsequently Lady Dilke.

And this is not a sketch, but a real picture, drawn carefully with an apprehension of the decorative significance of the subject. In the mind's eye we can shape a Manet portrait, with a definite delicacy of outline and a sober splendour of black for which we were wholly unprepared by anything in Mrs. Ward's previous narration. Even now we are afraid that, if we were to turn to those pages again, the vision would have vanished. But there, undeniably, it once was. The grey mist opened and closed again; and we are left with the pitiful sense that life may have been really thus, that a Mrs. Pattison may have really been a bright bird of plumage caged in the murk of an inhospitable clime. But oh, the high seriousness of it all! How many bright butterflies were broken on this Victorian wheel, and with how much more truth might it be said of Victorian ideals than of the Roman legions: *Solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant.* They laid waste the soul and called it peace.

November, 1918.

THE SORROWS OF SATAN

Wandering in disconsolate isolation among the triumphing crowds, we are the prey of a subtle despair. Life, or what seems to be life, is passing out of our grasp. We remember that in the remote August days four years ago, we were thrilled by the common emotion. We were a part of the nation, when with a sickening premonition we watched the Highlanders swinging past the Green Park on their way to something unknown and terrible. With their rhythm some nobility of valour and high resolve in ourselves kept time. In the set faces of those who watched with us we could read the workings of our own emotion. We were not outcast then.

To-day we are. Somewhere, in a manner and time which we seek forlornly to discover, the contact has been snapped. We are glad

that the slaughter of man by his brother has ended; but our gladness, though profound, is not spontaneous. A stern effort of the mind is needed to acknowledge that even this cause of satisfaction really exists. It is as though we had again to steel our imaginations and bend our flinching minds as we once did in order to understand that fellow-men in their thousands were being murdered and mutilated day after day. The process of understanding was long and terrible; yet we feel that the effort to respond to the *sursum corda* will be as long, and may be more terrible still. We have reason to rejoice and cannot rejoice.

Being what we are, we seek to understand ourselves. It is not the memory of our dead which weighs us down. To that burden we are accustomed and to the knowledge that we shall carry it with us to the end. A part, how great we do not know, of our soul is become for ever numbed and insentient. But with what remains we feel, and we feel no joy. It may be that it was through the friends who

are dead that the roots of our being found their way into the common life. Through them our personality may have been extended and touched by the general emotions. Now they have been severed, and we are left to live to ourselves, or to die.

The tree whose roots have been severed does not always die. There are some which grow to greater strength. Even though it should prove to be only the saving illusion, we shall believe that our present isolation reveals us stronger than we were. Not that we desire it in order to manifest our strength. There is no man who, being isolated in a crowd of his rejoicing fellows, does not desire to be one with them. But now we are prepared for the isolation; we are armed and nerved against it. We make a virtue of our grim necessity. And we know that it is not the loss of our friends that has brought the grim necessity upon us.

The horror of the crowd has seized upon us. Like men who stand on a crumbling island in the midst of a raging sea, we have watched

the spume and scum borne always to the summit of the angriest and most menacing wave. We have seen a Northcliffe and a Bottomley become the spiritual leaders of a people to which we once belonged; we have seen the reluctant people of America become fanatical for war, and all but disown the President whose authority alone gave to the last year of the struggle some element of its old moral significance; we have seen the people of Germany wait for the shock of defeat to turn upon the rulers who brought this ordeal upon the world. The war which was fought to make the world safe for democracy, the cynic in us argues, has ended by making democracy a danger to the world. The autocracies have crumbled, it is true; in the struggle for existence they have revealed themselves the weaker social units. But whether democracy has triumphed by virtue of more than the surplus of brute strength that comes from a greater elasticity, this we do not know. To believe it, we must make an act of faith.

It is precisely this act of faith in democracy which the war has made hard, if not impossible for us. What has been the attitude of democracy to Russia? Here was a giant nation, utterly exhausted by war, which had in a supreme effort thrown off the chains of a tyranny which had been a byeword among the free peoples of the world. Yet democracy treated it just as autocracy had done, as a soulless instrument of war. Had England been Prussia herself, she could not have been more ruthless and cruel. And who will dare to say with conviction that our treatment of the new-born German democracy will be otherwise? The greatest height of generosity which we have yet reached is to insist that Germany must be fed in order to work—for us. We propose to act as the slave-owner acted in the good old days, to keep body and soul together in order that the last ounce of labour may be extracted. Would autocracy have acted otherwise?

The evidence does not justify a faith in modern democracy; it justifies only the belief

that it is actually the strongest form of social organism that has yet been evolved. And the triumph of the stronger in the struggle for existence can be made the occasion of profound rejoicing only by those who are prepared to maintain that whatever is is good. The triumph of the stronger may be a subject for acquiescence, but surely not for exultation. It may be part of the immanent purpose that all those things which we were accustomed to call good should perish out of the world, or disappear for a season as long as our lifetime, but the purpose itself is not what we call good. And victory which preys upon its own vitals is hardly victory. Yet what was the vague thing we fought to win but the opportunity for those freedoms of thought and speech and act which we have sacrificed in the effort to victory?

And if we say the battle has been fought and the victory won for distant posterity, it may be answered that perhaps distant posterity will curse us for our pains. It may still, in the third or fourth generation, be pay-

ing for this victory with its blood, shed not with violence, but slowly drained away in factories where speeding-up has reached the limit of the endurable. It might be credible that we have secured posterity, if we had the sure knowledge that a mighty effort would be made to reassert the slumbering conscience of the world in the establishment of peace. If this peace were to be based on the justice of fraternity instead of the justice of retribution, on the new covenant instead of the old; if the high resolve that this should be the war to end wars were made good in act; if by some splendid assertion of humanity complete disarmament were achieved; if these things were to be, then there might be room for confidence. If we could only believe in such an act of liberation, then we could believe in many other things besides. But who will deny that the possibility of these ideals has diminished during the war? As the flood of hatred has ebbed on the one side, it has mounted on the other. And even were this burden removed

ideal remedies such as those which will alone give us back the old expectations are not applied by the scratch of a diplomatic pen. For these renunciations of vengeance and seeming advantage young minds and young wills are necessary; and they have been hurled by their thousands into nothingness. Few indeed remain of those who of their own free will dared everything for a future that was denied them; the old spirit did not, could not last. Its place has been taken by a lesser, but still valuable, thing, the horror of the war in those who have endured it. The champions of the positive ideal have perished; but the force of the negative ideal might still be drawn upon to shape the world anew.

We wander on disconsolate in the crowd. Not all these doubts are present to our mind in forms so acute as they now bear. But in the past they have risen one by one against our hope; they have torn away belief after belief, leaving wounds that ache dully within us. Only when we try to distinguish amid

the general pain do we remember what each particular intolerable and incredible happening was; only by long thinking can we realise that our faith was once unquestioning. To its slow decline we have steeled ourselves; we have heard the verdict, that we were dreamers; we have tightened our hearts and cannot expand them again. Like sick men who have learned to live from a trickle of air in their lungs, we stifle, even though we are told the air blows free once more.

> Nous avons cru en trop de choses
> Nous, les hommes de peu de foi;
> Nous avons esperé trop loin
> Nous, les hommes de peu d'espoir.

And while we reach timidly back into the past to discover the sequence of our wounds, and to remember what once we were, we begin to wonder why we are amazed. We should have known that it would be thus.

Thus, in the last resort, we find in ourselves so much at least of faith that we wonder at its absence. A small seed, in truth, but the bird of hope might one day again rest in the

branches of the tree that might spring from it, for a seed so tried and tested should produce a toughish plant. There is some logic, after all, in our saving illusion.

November, 1918.

A HERO OF OUR TIME

THE record of Frederick Keeling* is the record of a tragedy. The tragedy was national. because Keeling was characteristic of the generation which died in battle and won the war for humanity; and the record is a tragedy because the war was won only to be lost again. What Keeling died to save is being daily trampled underfoot by men who claim to speak in the name of England.

Keeling was not what is called a born hero. He belonged too much to his generation to be that, and his generation was one to which the idea of war was fantastic and impossible. The whole vast world of freedoms lay open to it. It had been emancipated from tradition and convention by the criticism of the generation

* "Keeling Letters and Recollections." (Allen and Unwin.)

immediately before it; or rather, it believed that many things had been overthrown merely because they were obscured by the dust of the assault upon them. It was an intensely self-conscious generation, filled with a sense of self-importance by the vastness of the liberties flung at its feet. The gospel of self-assertion was everywhere accepted, either deliberately or implicitly. Life and the world were occasions for experiment, and the failure of the experiment was of little account. Irresponsible and egotistic, it was nevertheless a prey to the consciousness of insecurity that comes from over-intellectualising experience. The discrepancy between impulse and conviction was insistent, and the remedy of enlarging conviction to square with impulse led merely to a mistrust of both. Contempt for the old was not balanced by any capacity to create the new; the desire to act was made sterile by indecision concerning what it was worth while to do. It was a generation which seemed for ever to be standing at the cross-roads of life,

as rich in promise as it was poor in fulfilment.

Of this generation Frederick Keeling, who was killed at the age of thirty in 1916, was typical. With it he sought after a sign. A "queer" character at Winchester, an enthusiastic Fabian at Cambridge, blessed with a sufficiency of unearned increment, he flung himself, like the Russian students of the 'sixties, into the ardours of social service. His letters afford us rich material to construct the anatomy of his being at this time. Obviously the flame of his social passion, though fierce, did not burn very pure. It was rather the accidental outlet of an existing energy than the source of a new one. He longed, in his own repeated words, "to shift things," and there was more of the Aristophanic *Weltvernichtungsidee* than of social reconstruction in his desire. He seems to have conceived himself as a kind of primitive Aryan, a natural man, full of "By God's!" and beer, to whom the achievement of "joviality" was the crown of human intercourse.

Before he had emerged from this unsatisfactory phase, he married. Since the editor of his letters has most wisely made public some of the details of this display of undisciplined energy we cannot forbear to discuss it, for his actions here most clearly reveal his hardly conscious determination to make his social theories serve his idiosyncrasies. He left his wife almost immediately after his marriage, apparently because she could not supply conversation of the intellectual level which he thought fit to demand, and thenceforward he seems to have treated her as a concubine, or, in his own more modern language, as a breeder. To justify his own action, he proclaimed the theory of promiscuity as a social ideal. But he was unconvinced by his own defence. The failure of his marriage obsessed him, and in spite of all his abundant intellectual apologia a sense of his own responsibility tormented him. For a long while there was in him too much vanity for him to confess that he had committed the crime of treating a fellow

human being merely as a means. His confession was always framed in general terms. "I never realised so clearly," he wrote, "what an infernally difficult business life is once you abandon some sort of tradition as a guide." Yet he knew, clearly enough, that his mistake was irremediable. "My family," he wrote in March, 1913, "unfortunately represents my first revolutionary phase." In other words, it was a marriage in theory, lacking the real substance of reciprocal sacrifice and mutual enrichment. Nothing could be made of it. It was no use as a refuge or as a road back into the common life when the slowly increasing consciousness of his isolation became oppressive. This isolation came with the gradual disintegration of his belief in Socialist ideal. His enthusiasm, like that of many Socialists, had been in the main dictatorial; he had desired to make men happy by Act of Parliament, and he was more interested in the satisfaction of compelling than in the happiness of the compelled. They were units, and he

was the disposer. This tendency in his mind was most insistent during a solitary period when he was at the head of a Labour Exchange in Leeds. Then he conceived himself as a bureaucrat with a tinge of Bushido asceticism, the perfect instrument of the omnipotent and unquestioned State. But the religion of Socialism could not sustain him; it could not maintain itself against the realities which he perceived. Socialists, he discovered, were vain and petty like other people; the ordinary people of England existed in their own right independent of the problematical alchemy of the social revolution. Socialism as a system of material organisation was valuable still, but it could no longer be the object of an enthusiasm; it left out of account the fundamental reality, which was the human soul.

Thus he became aware that he was uprooted. He had lost contact with the human soul; he had suffered his conception of life and his fellow-men to be mechanised. His old point of view had been too logical. The fire of his

old enthusiasm had had no fuel. It burned out and left him cold. "There must be some background to it all," he wrote in June, 1914:

> Nothing supernatural or ecclesiastical—I loathe the degradation of the human spirit by the priest as much as ever I did. I only want something to take the place of what I had as a youth in my dreams of a glorious marching Socialist democracy. I seem to find shimmerings of a substitute in a kind of almost Quaker-like belief in brotherly love apart from any theistic sanction.

This suggestion that brotherly love might be made in some sort his religion sprang from the strength of his desire to be of one body with his fellow-men. "I crave," he wrote in July, 1914, "above all things to make myself a part of 'the social organism'—or whatever one likes to call it—as it is." The religion of the State as the mechanical bond between men was being superseded in his mind by the religion of the Country as an organic bond between them. But how was he who had discovered his need of contact to regain it?

To Keeling the war came at first as the god-given answer to his incessant question: What

must I do? Enlistment was the opportunity for disciplined service to an ideal which his mind approved. Not that his mind made many difficulties about the cause in the first thrill of complete satisfaction. He was merged in the whole as he longed to be; the imperious, uncomfortable, incalculable self was lost, now that he was set under an authority which he could not challenge. The very detail of discipline became a delight to him; and more than this, he entered upon a relationship with his fellow-men which had hitherto eluded his seeking. What Charles Péguy profoundly called *le mystique* of soldiering entered into him. It was a craft, a religion, a voluntary dedication of himself:

> This service has its honour: that its gift
> Bears no equality of recompense.
> It is a solemn covenant, whose end
> Lies in its own fulfilment. There's no force
> Compels their signature: they've freely given
> And freely do receive of wounds and pain.

Therefore the thought of conscription was abhorrent to him. It diminished from his

honour as a soldier, and, since the old invincible Adam had come to life in him when the clamour for conscription began to be raised, he now laid stress upon the cause as well as the craft. Liberty could be defended only by free men.

As in the old days he had felt himself subsiding from his revolutionary ardours to acquiescence in the slow advances of Liberalism, so now he found himself a Liberal in the most ideal sense of the word. But in the long agony of the Flanders trenches, with "nothing special to report" and one man in ten maimed or killed every night in the front line, this faith could not last. Not that he ever despaired of or denied his ideal; his vision of future fraternity and reconciliation was sharpened and intensified, and his sense of the identical humanity of the German soldier in the trench before him all but intolerable. But vision and belief of this could not sustain him. It was the craft and its honour which did that. He refused leave till all the men of his platoon

had taken theirs; he refused the comfortable positions offered him; he refused a commission many times. The comradeship of the sergeants' mess, the submersion of self in the collective emotion of a regiment, were sufficient, or all but sufficient, to him. Ideals he kept; they were high, and purified by his own ordeal: but he could not continuously keep them before his mind. "I feel," he wrote, "as if my mind were twitching in the effort to clutch at the life of thought." There were moments when the convulsive effort was too much for him, when he let go all hold on the thought of a better world, and his imagination could conceive nothing fairer than the old world, unaltered and at peace:

> I used to be primarily a reformer. . . . I still am it, *au fond*. But when I dream of *après la guerre*, I do not think at all of the great social problems which will immediately arise. I just think of the world—this good old cheery ball of earth—as a place of exquisite beauty, adventure, joy, love, and experience. I am perfectly content with it as it is. I even love its defects as we almost love the defects of a friend or lover who almost satisfies one. You will not find the man from the trenches

is going to hate the German to the order of the politician, and refuse to buy German goods which are obviously preferable to the English product. By God! I can see the scene—before the peace, even during the armistice. The infantrymen will swarm over the parapets of the trenches on both sides, and will exchange every damned thing which they can spare off their persons—down to their buttons and hats, and bits of their equipment—for "souvenirs."

"Execration," he wrote at another time, "is a civilian trade." If we look for the belief which underlay that conviction, we find that it was not merely that the soldier has a higher code of honour and chivalry than the civilian. For all his devotion to the soldier's craft Keeling was too thoroughly aware that he was a soldier for one purpose only to accept such a belief as ultimate. He believed that the real England was in the Army, was the Army. His faith in the Army was a faith in England. The Army, created as it was out of the generous impulse of the flower of English manhood, had drained England of her finest force. What was left behind was colourless or alien, neither worthy of nor intelligible to the in-

fantryman. The principal task of the politician was not to be unworthy of the soldier; the soldier was the judge of the politicians. They were not England. He was. Keeling's faith in this was as transparently simple as it was profoundly true.

A second phase followed the complete immersion of himself in the social body of an Army which incorporated all that made England noble and lovely. This phase had been critical. Before it, the roots of Keeling's soul were in danger of starvation. He had gone his own way, trusting in his own energy and confident in his intellectual superiority. He had made intellectual equality his standard of vital relation. He had consorted solely with an *intelligentsia* and in an over-weening conceit had drawn a rigid line of division between the satisfaction of his intellectual and his bodily appetites. His very zeal for reform had been, in essence, no more than the desire for intellectual satisfactions divorced from the sympathy and understanding which alone can

give them validity. To him the body politic and individual human beings had been vile bodies for experiment. He had been slowly starving and approaching sterility because—let us say the word openly—he had no love. We are afraid, nowadays, to speak of love. We are afraid to speak of it because we know in our hearts that the breath of the very word will find us naked and shivering before the bar of the conscience which we have trampled down. Keeling had been typical of modern England in many things, but most typical of all in this that he had had no love. And love alone can save the world, and raise humanity above the condition of beasts to whom civilisation has brought only a more various appetite for brutal satisfactions.

Would that we could say Keeling was typical in his subsequent history. He, who had had no love, sought it and found it. Not consciously, but instinctively, he obeyed the greatest spiritual precept that has been given to mankind: "He who loseth his life, shall

save it." Keeling lost his tyrannous individual life when he subdued his soul to the comradeship of a band of devoted heroes. He was enriched by a new communion, and a generous love. And when the second phase began, he had found a faith worthy of himself. The band of heroes was dissolved, wasted and decimated by the hand of war. He was thrown back upon himself, but upon a self no longer starved and sterile by divorcement from humanity. He wrote in December, 1915:

I am separated from my battalion now, and even when I am in it the death and departure of the great majority of the men with whom I did my first year's soldiering prevents it from being the same corporate body which it once was for me. It seems no more than a mere necessary trough for shovelling us poor human units into the war machine; and as the idea of it has receded into the background, as a source of vision for making this life worth living and this work worth doing, the idea of England as a whole takes its place. Religion I have no use for; it seems no good in this hell. Vision a man needs, but not shadowy wraiths; his gods must be like the old pagan gods that spring from the realities of the human heart upon the earth. Honour, patriotism, and comradeship are one's best stays. Patriotism we English have, but I think a far less cultivated patriotism than men of some other

races. God forbid that we should cultivate it like the Germans. But a man may gain strength from refining and winnowing and treasuring his views of what he means by his country, just as men have undoubtedly gained strength by communing with what they call their God.

These are words so noble, so true, so evidently bearing upon them the mark of the price paid to acquire the truth which they contain, that an agony of desolation seizes us when we look upon what has come of it all. That a man of Keeling's quality should have been killed to make a triumph for men whose every action has been an insult to Keeling's faith fills us with such bitterness that we could blaspheme against humanity itself. And Keeling was one of many, distinguished from the others by a gift of vision and expression. But his faith was theirs. He was the priest of their city of souls, and the temple wherein he sacrificed was the Temple of Humanity. A few weeks later (in January, 1916) he wrote :

I do not care for the poem you sent me, because in the bitterness of things out here I have no use for " God " or

for the sentiment that we in our holy righteousness are fighting a nation of brutes. I respect the Germans as soldiers, I sympathise with the poor devil of the German infantryman who goes through the same hell as I do in a bombardment, and I see the German point of view about the *Lusitania*, the Cavell business, and other matters too clearly to feel any sympathy for the yap, yap, yap of the Press about these things. I am out to do my bit towards the inflicting as much as possible of a military defeat on the Germans. I am not interested in exaggerating their infamy. If it were a question of being deceived into belittling them either better or worse than they are, I would choose the former alternative. Why? Because no conceivable good can be done to mankind at large by exaggerating the infamy of any nation. And speaking as a man face to face with the chances of death, I can honestly say that humanity and England's contribution to the Temple of Humanity are the only ideal conceptions for which I have any use.

Keeling was killed on August 18th, 1916. A future generation will read his letters side by side with the speeches of our governors; and it will be overwhelmed by a sense of pity and wonder that such a sacrifice could have been made to such an end. To us who stand so near the event the calm which is necessary to pity and wonder is denied. Our indignation and our shame are burning. It may be

that in the whirligig of time we shall find our way back again to a shadow of that faith in England which has been so vilely taken from us. But one thing is certain: to those of Keeling's wayward, generous, martyred generation who survive, faith in England can never be what it was. The bright shield has been tarnished. But the future may learn from Keeling's letters how bright it was, and how bright it could have been maintained if the England of the heroes and the martyrs had not been betrayed by her demagogues. "These ranters and intriguers," wrote Keeling in November, 1915, "seem to me simply a scum floating above the natures of all these types that do stand for something real in England." After three years, the something real has been annihilated: only the scum remains.

December, 1918.

THE PROBLEM OF THE INTELLIGENTSIA

THERE is one thing which will never be forgiven Mr. Lloyd George. We had hoped, often desperately, against hope, that our instinctive distrust of him was in essence mistaken, and that it was born of the knowledge that his ways are not as our ways. At times we thought that perhaps the truth might really be that he was governed by one sole belief, that a complete and crushing military victory over Germany was necessary to the salvation of the world, and that to this supreme end all means were lawful. In our moments of optimism we have imagined that, this end once achieved, he would by some generous gesture or utterance reveal that it was not for his own glory or the satisfaction of a thirst for personal power that he deliberately gathered all the

authority of this country into his own hands, and threw the British Constitution on to the refuse-heap, to be torn, like so much offal, by the pariah Press. He had it in his power to regain for England all her lost liberties, and more. One speech rededicating our sacrifices to the great cause for which they were made, one appeal to the victorious nation to be mindful of its high calling, one word of rebuke to the jackal-howl for vengeance, would have been enough. England will always respond to a noble summons. She would have responded, had the summons been made. Mr. Lloyd George alone could have made it.

Instead of this, he makes an election. The peculiar iniquity of the election does not here concern us. We are concerned with the moral effect of this incredibly sordid *dénouement* upon minds which have been tense with apprehension and expectation since the war began. There are many who have maintained their sanity against the horror of the incessant carnage solely by the thought that for a

supreme ideal the price to be paid must needs be supreme. These were, for the most part, men who in the days before the war were not accustomed to think or act politically. By the standards of Solon perhaps they were not good citizens; they gratefully breathed the air of liberty and in return gave, not a vote, but the best work of which they were capable. They lived in the clouds and, half-consciously, showed by their absorption that they considered the theoretic life the best of all. Suddenly, they learned that the freedom which was their vital air, the sense of unlimited if unused possibilities of thought and act, was menaced. The ordered peace of the world was in danger of disaster.

From the moment of that alarm until now the members of this *intelligentsia*—we use the term for lack of a better—have been the most passionately determined citizens of all. They have seemed in their determination to be divided against themselves. To the total both of the volunteers in the first week of the war

and the conscientious objectors to military service, they gave numbers out of all proportion to their quota. Indeed, it may roughly be said that those of them who were of military age were either volunteers or conscientious objectors. The proportion of conscripts among them was incredibly small. This was symbolic of the unity which underlay their ostensible division. They fought for freedom within and without the realm; they could not conceive that freedom could be otherwise than freely won.

But the great majority of them were volunteers in the national cause. To formulate within one's mind a conscientious objection to war demands an application of thought to political contingencies which few of them had given. War was a possibility so remote that it lay below their horizon; they had had no occasion to consider their attitude towards it. Thus it was easy for them to look upon the war when it came as the war to end wars. It was necessary that this should be its nature

and its purpose, for only with such a justification could it come within their sanctions. Nor was it that they instinctively invested the struggle with the attributes demanded by their morality. In its origin the war was a war against war; and in their insistence upon this fundamental purpose they were the silent spokesmen of the nation. Thenceforward, they fought and thought for England, but it was an ideal England, neither wholly indifferent from, nor wholly the same as the real—the England of generous impulse, by self-imposed knight-errantry the champion of every nation rightly struggling to be free, proud of a strength which was based upon the achievement of a civil liberty unequalled in the world.

Thus the war brought into the political life of England an idealistic force without parallel in her history. What was lavished at the end of the eighteenth century on the victorious democracy of France by our great poets, was given now to England herself by their descendants, and the gift sealed by a long-drawn

sacrifice of which, as the careless enthusiasm cooled, the determination hardened. We are not associating ourselves with the calculated slander of "the politician" by the "stunt" press when we say that our politicians during the war showed themselves unworthy of this new adhesion to the national strength. Perhaps they were not so much unworthy as unaware of it, for seeing that they led the nation into the conflict with clean hands it was never impossible that they should have retained the confidence of these sensitive and devoted minds. The war-measures taken were not inevitably matters of conflict or occasions of disillusion. Even the vexed issue of conscription itself would have been robbed of its sting, had there been a leader of moral strength enough to have silenced the yelpings of the Press with a stern "No!" so long as conscription was unnecessary, and to have appealed frankly to the devotion of the nation when no other course remained. The *intelligentsia* was always ready to believe that the end would justify the

means; but the end should have been proclaimed again and again, with ever-increasing resonance and definiteness: "Clean-handed we went into the struggle, clean-handed we will go out of it again." Instead of this, it was given the spectacle of leaders lacking the courage to resist the vile agitations of the Press or the unlawful appetites of secret diplomacy.

Worse was to follow. The inability to resist shameful intrigues was evidence of moral weakness; but the revelation that the intrigues were inspired by Judases in the Government itself dealt the last blow to the faith of the *intelligentsia.* When weak honesty had been replaced by organised dishonesty and manifest corruption, the wells were poisoned. Suspicion became their second nature. They had borne the heat and burden of the day; they were prepared to receive only a penny for their reward; but the apprehension that their penny would be a bad one hardened into a certainty. They hoped, as we have said, desperately against hope, and against their better

knowledge of Mr. Lloyd George, that some impulse of his youth might win a late triumph, but they hoped, as they knew, in vain. From the steps of his showman's car, striped with buff and blue and wreathed in Union Jacks, they heard as in a dream the triumphant demagogue shouting at them that they were reactionaries, that they were the vested prejudices, the enemies of the people, while the vested interests (incorporated in the fat impresarios beside him on the steps) were the people's friends.

For them the temptation to blaspheme against democracy is well-nigh irresistible. Their impulse is to tear themselves away from the body politic in which they have merged themselves, and to hide themselves apart in caves and temples. But the impulse must not be obeyed. What remains of them must persevere in the resolve to rescue what remains of their sacrifice for the ideal for which it was made. The urgent question for them is how they are to stand fast and in alliance with whom. The weak honesty of the Liberal

Party has already betrayed them too often; they are Liberals who have no use for the Liberal Party. It has no use for them. Labour remains. But their problem cannot be answered by the mere process of elimination. They seek a positive satisfaction, and their hesitations are not conjured away by their realisation that they have no other choice. Let us be honest. They are not quite sure of Labour. They ask only that the equality of all men should be steadfastly pursued as an ideal; but they ask that this equality shall be real, and that its reality shall be guaranteed. On such an equality a structure of ideals can be raised which will be a temple of humanity. Will Labour guarantee this?

The question, What guarantee of equality does Labour offer to the *intelligentsia?* is not answered by the placid assurance that one man shall have one vote. The equality of the vote was a guarantee of real equality only so long as the vote was sovereign. The *intelligentsia* does not object to being outvoted.

What it wants is a guarantee that nothing worse will befall it than to be outvoted. It does object to being outlawed. So long as the vote was sovereign every issue was brought into the open. The arguments on either side were heard, and in the momentary suspension of judgment the fundamental equity of the nation could prevail. But to this system two things are necessary. The first is that the vote should not be falsified. The second is that it should be the sole method of enforcing political decisions. Mr. Lloyd George has resolved that the first rule should be suspended; and we should be ostriches if we were to blind ourselves to the fact that Labour has another means of enforcing its will.

At first sight it would seem that the question reduces itself to whether Labour is firmly determined to reassert the Parliamentary system and itself to remain a constitutional party. If one is an optimist, one may be satisfied with the action of the party in throwing open its membership to the *intelligentsia*. But the

satisfaction will be short-lived. Though the analogy between English Labour and German Social Democracy is far from being exact, it has its significance. The *intelligentsia* has played from the beginning a leading part in the German movement. It has had infinitely more authority and influence in the German labour movement than we can conceive it obtaining, at least within a reasonable time, in England. But now at the moment of crisis that seemingly secure influence is vanishing like smoke. The intellectuals are being dragged along by forces over which they have no longer any control. All the leaders of German Socialism (save perhaps Liebknecht) are by conviction democrats and constitutional democrats. They believe in the equality and the sovereignty of the vote. Yet every day they are being forced to abjure their faith.

It will be said that the analogy is inexact on a vital point. Germany is involved in defeat and revolution, and only in these conditions is the assumption of power by Soldiers' and

Workmen's Councils possible. At least the maintenance of that power depends upon disorderly mobilisation, and disorderly mobilisation is out of the question with us. Probably this is true, though we have yet to see whether victory obviates or merely postpones the consequences of defeat. In any case, it is beside the mark. The revolutionary machinery of Russia and Germany is no more essential than any means to any other end. There are plenty of other instruments of direct action, and chief among them is the one which has lately become very familiar in England, the sectional strike.

From the purely theoretical point of view the acceptance of the strike, both as a political and as an industrial weapon, is impossible for a constitutional party. Yet no man in his senses supposes that Labour is likely to surrender the weapon. It has been sanctified by usage and justified by results. Moreover, there has been a fairly clear division in practice between the industrial and the political strike,

and a fairly general acquiescence in the industrial strike as a legitimate means of improving conditions and wages. But the fact is that although the sense of a distinction remains, the distinction itself is approaching the vanishing point. During the war the wages of most of the considerable industries have been forced a good way above their economic maximum. Yet this is the Plimsoll line which divides an industrial wage-strike from a political wage-strike. It is passed insensibly. But the character of the strike is nevertheless essentially changed when it is passed. The wage-strike then becomes a means of levying a toll upon the community at large. The burden falls upon that class of unorganised wage-earners to which the "intellectuals" mostly belong.

The consolation which the modern theorists of Labour offer the intellectuals here sounds more comforting than it really is. We are assured that the purpose of the strikes of the future is not to increase wages,

but to abolish them. The workers will take control of the industry, and assign to themselves payment for their labour which, being based not upon the market-value of labour as a commodity, but upon the human needs of the worker, will be wages no longer. But, in the first place, it is at present doubtful whether such a development, which brings with it a burden of new responsibilities, will prove as attractive to the organised workers as the irresponsible exploitation of the general community which the ordinary wage-strike offers. To the vast majority of working men the economic struggle presents itself as a direct conflict between Labour and Capital; comparatively few have the awareness that most of what they apparently win from capital is taken from fellow-workers, who in turn, if they are organised, indemnify themselves by the same means. The final sufferer is the unorganised worker; and since the workers whom it is most difficult or impossible to organise are those who live by individual creative work—namely, the

intellectuals without unearned increment, the burden is to a large extent borne by them. And, in the second place, even if the strikes of the future are made with the avowed object of abolishing the wage-system, and are successful in their aim, the appeal of the unorganised intellectual worker in the new community will still be an appeal *ad misericordiam*. On the plane on which the social argument is being conducted the creative intellectual is not a producer of necessary commodities. At best he provides ideal satisfactions, and ideal satisfactions are necessary only where the validity of the ideal is recognised. Of course, it is inevitable that in the long run his claims will be met and his indispensability admitted, and, we believe, admitted more generously than they have ever been under the old system where the competition among intellectuals is murderous. But he cannot close his eyes to the fact that the long run is likely to be disastrous to him.

The intellectuals are not utterly self-

absorbed ; they can make sacrifices. The war has proved it, for it is their lives and conditions of life which have suffered most by the war. They do not demand material guarantees of generous treatment. They feel, however, that there is a very considerable chance that they will be condemned to suffer yet more, and to suffer as undeservedly as they have in the past. They do not ask for an undertaking that the chance should be reduced to *nil ;* that, they know, would be crying for the moon. What they ask for is a reasonable expectation that their claims will be considered, that they will not be treated as parasites on society because they do not happen to produce things that can be eaten or worn or used in the material sense. Without this reasonable expectation, their support of Labour must be half-hearted, and their community with it superficial.

Real guarantees are impossible in the nature of the case ; they could only be given if the "intellectuals" did produce necessary commodities, and then they would be self-created

by voluntary organisation. Just as they do not produce real things, they do not expect real guarantees. Since they produce ideal things, they want ideal guarantees. The only ideal guarantee that can be given them is a reasonable confidence in the moral character of Labour as a political force. If they can once believe that Labour serves the ideal interests of humanity as well as it serves the immediate interests of a class, then the last barrier between the intellectuals and the Labour Party will have been cast down. At the present moment they are divided between belief and doubt, between hope and fear. Will Labour prove to be the party of altruism? Labour has it in its power to rededicate the sacrifices of this war to the cause for which they were made. It can insist that the peace shall be indeed a clean peace; it can clear the ground upon which the temple of human equality and future peace may be built. Will Labour exercise its power?

If Labour insists upon a just settlement, the fire of a new hope will be kindled in the

doubtful hearts of the *intelligentsia*. Labour will have given them an incontrovertible proof that it, and it alone, serves the ideal of human equality, and is ready to make sacrifices for the ideal. Although we know that the sacrifice will not be really required of it, and that the advantages dangled before its eyes if it gives the forces of injustice and reaction a free hand are only fictitious advantages, nevertheless the renunciation of vengeance, of intolerable indemnities, and of the indulgence of power will be a real act of faith in an ideal. Generosity may pay; it is none the less generosity. If Labour is generous in the great thing it will assuredly be generous in the small. The fate of the intellectuals is insignificant compared with the destiny of the world. But even if it were certain that the *intelligentsia* would be crushed between the upper and nether millstones of social evolution and that Labour would not stretch out a hand to save them, still it would be their duty to work and fight for Labour, if it responded to this supreme

summons of the ideal. They would then know that if they must be sacrificed, they would be sacrificed, not vainly or arbitrarily, but in a cause which their hearts and minds approved.

Here then is the decisive test. The question of the *intelligentsia* will soon be answered, and their problem solved. It makes no difference should Labour be compelled to enforce its participation in an international Labour Conference, and to back the decisions taken there by extra-parliamentary means. Since Mr. George has chosen to make use of the parliamentary system to stultify Parliament, the vote has been made, at least temporarily, valueless as a guarantee of equality. It may come to its own again; but the decision may be taken and the fate of the world sealed while it is in exile. A heroic remedy must be applied. Labour alone can apply it. If it acts manfully, the problem of the *intelligentsia* will exist no longer, for its hunger for faith will have been satisfied.

December, 1918.

THE DEFEAT OF IMAGINATION

It is now two years since M. Georges Duhamel wrote in "Vie des Martyrs" words of an import and implication so terrible that they have been like a poison in our blood, a haunting refrain to desolate the mind. "L'être humain," he wrote, "souffre toujours solitairement dans sa chair, et c'est pourquoi la guerre est possible." It was not a discovery or a revelation. We had always known that it was so. The force of the words lay in their power to throw a calm, cold light upon a thing of whose presence we knew, yet dared not look upon. In the flooding ray of this acknowledgment our indignation and our protest withered. Till then we had, by God knows what tortuous process of intellectual self-preservation, half-convinced ourselves that the answer to the incessant question, Is it possible? was, No, it is

not possible. We are caught in the toils of some grotesque and giant mistake, we said. Someone will suddenly let drop a word, and it will be revealed. We shall fall upon the necks of our brother-men, and laugh and cry over the nightmare folly that is lifted from us. A man will climb to the pinnacle of the Nelson Monument and cry to the world some simple sentence: "My little children . . ." We shall not wait for the end of the words we know. He will have told us that we are little children, lost in a dark forest. It is this that we have forgotten.

There was fever in the dream. For one man one cooling drug, for another, another. For us it was the calm, cold light of M. Duhamel's words. The possibility which we had denied stood before us in the frozen, intolerable rigidity of a law. Against it we might dash our minds, but they would break. The law of the solitariness of human suffering would remain. A man cannot suffer his neighbour's physical pain. If he could, there would

be no war. Thus the problem was posed. It was a problem so urgent and all-devouring that we began to dream again and to ask why were not all the minds of the world implacably at work to discover the means by which one man may suffer with another. But all the minds of the world were engaged in discovering the means by which one man may inflict a yet greater infinity of suffering upon another, and himself be unwrung by the pain.

The men of old knew the problem. The Greeks, who first taught the world the potency of the idea, solved it with a word. As though creating a new law, they framed the word "sympathein." But the magic of the idea has departed from it. The world has since learnt that the word does not make the reality. It is no longer a challenge of power thrown out over chaos. With the word the thing had been willed, but the matter was reluctant. Sympathy became in modern speech a mere shadow, all but a parody, of its brave intention. It is worn smooth by facile use; a coin, no

longer a creation, a relic of the days when the mind had been all-daring and had clamoured for entrance at every gate of the sluggish soul. The mind had said: One man shall suffer with another. He shall suffer his brother's pain.

But the fiat of the mind is fact only in the kingdom where the mind is sovereign. It is a small kingdom. The community of minds which created "sympathy" was only a fraction of humanity. Only a fraction of humanity kept that coinage bright and new. The rest were as savages who have caught the language of their masters and make use of it in pidgin spells and incantations to their obscene divinities. For "sympathy," like all true words, was not a conquest made by the mind once and for all, thereafter never to be challenged or assailed. It was a space of light desperately won from an unconquered darkness. Each generation which would set foot in it had to defend it and to be aware that it was precarious and impossible to maintain. It had to will the impossible ever and ever again;

it had to draw the soul out of the body like a sword out of its sheath, to cut through the net of human limitations. The mind must be dashed against the inevitable law, careless of death.

Sympathy was the challenge of the mind to the material universe. By the word humanity denied the solitariness of human pain. It claimed proudly that it possessed a spirit that could dominate all material limitation, leap the physical abyss that divides one man from another, and inhabit its brother's soul and body at will. By virtue of this spirit man could triumph over time and space; he could rise on its wings and poise calmly above Necessity itself; he could summon up the dead and hold converse with the future. This spirit was imagination. Man pitted imagination against Necessity.

This was at least the faith. It was a true faith for those who believed in it. But they had a singular capacity for belief. They persuaded themselves that "man" was all men,

whereas "man" was only themselves. They pitted imagination against necessity; all men did not. They strained their minds in the effort to suffer their brothers' pain; but they were few. For themselves they made war impossible, but not for the world. Now, in the grim light of the event they see that a chasm divides them from the world. Necessity has stolen a four years' march upon them. Such a wall has been built between them and the world, knit together by such cement of blood and iron, that it has become unscalable. It rose so slowly that they had barely seen it before it was too late to cast it down. Before the war they were of one body with mankind; they were one with mankind because they believed they were one. Imagination in those days had easy victories. At the beginning of the war they were still one; they could believe —were they not told it?—that this one last fight must be fought in order that imagination should be victorious in the mind of a people who had supplanted it by calculation. Those

servants of the material, exploiters of necessity, must be shown that imagination was sovereign : might was not right.

In its origin and essence the war was a struggle of the imagination against the sluggish soul. Neither the origin nor the essence was pure. If the imagination had been freed on its side from the dross of sluggishness, it would have known that victory could not be bought at such a price of pain. Its will to action would have been paralysed by knowledge. More rightly, the struggle lay between a little imagination and none. Spiritually, the struggle was ended when the people of no imagination had received so much experience of pain as would supply its place. The moment soon came when on both sides there had been amassed a sufficient consciousness of the grotesque impossible quagmire into which humanity had wandered to safeguard the world for generations. The mass of consciousness had accumulated, but the treasure was incommunicable. It lay in the soldier's keep-

ing; and the decision lay elsewhere. Where the decision lay, there was no imagination; the soul was sluggish as it always had been. Thus the war, that was a struggle of the imagination, became an orgy of Necessity.

So the wall grew between the men of imagination and mankind. On the one side imagination was purified and completed by experience; on the other, an incapacity for imagination hardened into a deliberate refusal to imagine. Imagination was prescribed. It weakened the power of the fighting machine; it made units men again. The attempt to break down the barrier of the solitariness of human suffering became high treason. Worse than this, it was branded as madness. And it was madness. Suddenly it became plain that madness is a matter of majorities. Because ten million men are banded together to deny that another million are in pain, it is madness to declare their sufferings to the world.

Thus imagination was not merely rejected; it was put in a mad-house. The one power

which could make war impossible was banished from society. In every warring nation there appeared a division far more profound than any which lay between itself and the enemy. This condition was openly confessed. For all his madness, the advocate of peace at home was regarded as a being more hateful than the enemy, while in the eyes of the advocate of peace, the advocate of peace among the enemy stood nearer to him than the advocate of war at home. But these spiritual affinities brought no relief. The imaginative minority remained a minority, even though there were moments when its numbers were apparently swelled. For if the numbers increased on one side, they diminished on the other. The temporary reinforcement was composed of treacherous elements whose ardour for war abated when the prospects of victory appeared dim or remote, and it was counterbalanced on the other side by the falling away of those to whom the expectation of triumph seemed near. The imaginative minority had been

constituted finally at the end of about a year of war. It gained few adherents afterwards.

The minority had three full years to realise the truth they had learned, and painfully to reconstruct their world on other foundations. Imagination could no longer be one of them. Imagination was a reed; if humanity leaned upon it, it broke under the weight of the majority. It was no use to hold that mankind would inevitably rally to imagination in the long run. The war had shown that a catastrophe, against which imagination was the only defence, might be consummated long before imagination had prevailed among men. The problem of the minority was to orientate themselves in a new world. It was not really a new world; it was the old one for the first time clearly seen. But it was a new world for them, a world not without imagination, but one in which imagination had no supremacy, and dared not claim it; a world in which the lines of cleavage were entirely different from what they had seemed to be; a world which at

the first sight seemed cold and alien and hostile, yet afterwards appeared to have at least the attraction that discoveries might be made in it and new lessons learned.

December, 1918.

THE NATURE OF CIVILISATION

We look down from the mountain of our isolation upon this strange world of fact wherein imagination wanders like a timid and uneasy exile. We are constrained to say that we accept it. The impulse is almost overwhelming to withdraw into ourselves and discover in the endurance of our souls the principles of a new stoicism. If it were possible to find rest in such an abnegation of faith and common effort, we have it in us to be satisfied with the honest and sedulous cultivation of our garden. But acceptance in this merely passive sense can hardly be sufficient. However much we may feel that we are among the last representatives of an old order, we cannot, like Cassiodorus, resign ourselves to writing our memories and calmly contemplating our fish-ponds amid its ruins.

What lies beneath this refusal it would be hard to say, but the most obvious motive for it is the reluctance of the individual to admit that he is "queer." To claim a sixth sense which sets him apart from his fellows is not a source of pride to the sensitive man; it is rather a source of malaise, which may slumber for a season, but will in the end inevitably lead to a madness which is not a matter of majorities.

We are thus bound to hold that the barrier between the imaginative minority and the unimaginative majority of mankind is a temporary one. That does mean that we are bound to believe that it will be removed in our time. The time to be waited may well be a time in the sense of the Book of Daniel, ideal rather than real; and we must acknowledge that the hope, in itself slender, rests upon a singularly precarious foundation. If we could repress the instinctive refusal to admit that we are "queer" and to acquiesce in conclusions which seem to drive us straight to that admission, we should be forced to state the

facts in a way which left no escape for humanity on this side of miracle. There would be not the faintest trouble in reading modern history in such a fashion that the disaster of the war would appear not a terrible aberration of mankind, but the logical culmination of all that process of complicating and multiplying material satisfactions which began with the Industrial Revolution in England and has usurped the name of civilisation. This so-called civilisation, it could be clearly shown, has acted merely as a multiplying instrument. It has increased the desires of man, and increased the horrors of the method he has always chosen to attain them if unimpeded satisfaction were not permitted. In himself, man is neither better nor worse than he was two hundred years ago, but he is by the material discoveries of labour-saving methods, and the pseudo-moral discovery of the nation (which is hardly more than the national army) a thousand times stronger than he was. Where there were in the old days only ten thousand people to be killed, since the slenderness of a King's resources would not

permit of greater waste, and a hundred were killed, now there are ten million to be killed and a million are killed. On the other hand, imagination and the sense of the ideal, which depend for their existence on the effort of the individual mind, enjoy nothing of this reduplication of their strength. Civilisation, so-called, has therefore meant the multiplication of the baser forces of humanity as compared with the higher.

Nevertheless, though we may accept this statement of historical fact, and see in the increase of mechanical agencies in the last resort merely an increase of the herd, we are not absolutely compelled to envisage the future as a process of further intensification of the animal instincts of mankind. Perhaps it is probable that the future will be of this kind; perhaps the chances of its being otherwise are so few that if we were guided by calculation alone we should leave them out of the reckoning. But we cannot extinguish the spark of faith within ourselves. We are realists in so far that we are determined to avoid doing

violence to the truths of honest observation; we are idealists where realism permits us a choice between a better and a worse. As realists we admit that it has been proved that imagination cannot play the part which we once believed it played in determining the destiny of humanity, at least, not for many years; as idealists, we refuse to admit that it is condemned to perpetual bondage. Nothing compels us to admit this; therefore we will not.

The very consideration of the disaster of the war as a consequence of the increase of the herd by the mechanical annihilation of obstacles between individuals, which at first sight seemed to consolidate our pessimism, really opens a way to optimism. A herd appears to the mind as a collection of beasts; it suggests the manifestation of the collective animality of mankind at the expense of its higher or other aptitudes. But that is due to other reasons besides the obvious one that the herd-manifestation under whose influence we now are has been largely bestial. It is due also to the

instinctive impulse of the individual to deny that he is not completely individual, and unique—an impulse which evokes, as an immediate reaction to the use of the term "herd," a picture of the Gadarene swine rushing down the steep into the sea. But, in fact, a herd might just as well be a herd of angels as of pigs, and our unfortunate habit of calling a collection of angels a choir instead, merely proceeds from the stupid assumption that the only way of keeping human beings with nothing to do out of temptation is to keep them singing. A choir of angels is merely a herd under a peculiar and not very satisfactory kind of control. There are better kinds of control, and a herd of human beings might be something more satisfying than a choir of angels. At least there appears to be no good reason why it could not be.

For the most singular characteristic of the modern herd, or the modern nation, is its newness. The very arteries of the organism are the improved means of communication which have been invented in the last 150 years.

It has been created by railways and steamships and the telegraph, almost within the memory of living man. And though it is hard to resist the immediate impulse to regard the late disaster as the direct consequence of these material victories, on a longer view it seems more reasonable to look upon the war as the inevitable trial of new-found strength between these newly created organisms or nations. Like Jeshurun, the world waxed fat and kicked. The nation was merely a magnified specimen of the individual in the State in which he was before the process of civilisation had begun. There was, indeed, a general belief that by some secret virtue of its own the process had changed the nature of the general ruck of men. The benefits and beauties of civilisation were so often and so eloquently extolled that it was hard to make headway against the consensus of eulogy ; and though there were isolated thinkers who had their doubts and suspected a confusion of terminology, they never systematised their misgivings, or, if they did, they put themselves out of court

by their manifest desire to tug the wheels of history backward. They did not like the look of this civilisation; they wanted to return to an older one. They could not admit both the axioms which now appear necessary.

The first is that there is no going back on modern civilisation. Just as no man who has learned to count in figures will indulge his atavism and use his fingers and his toes for reckoning, it is impossible to make away with the material discoveries of which modern civilisation is composed. The second axiom is that modern civilisation is only a complex of material discoveries and nothing more. In other words, it is not a civilisation at all. It is a material condition which has usurped a spiritual title. The excitement of the process of its creation was so great that the peoples involved in it had no time to look about them. The fervour of activity was upon them, and they made, with an ease which now seems to us almost miraculous, the assumption that their fervour was a moral fervour. The gospel of progress was proclaimed, and no one had

time to be surprised that it turned out to be the gospel of *laissez-aller*. On the contrary, everyone was delighted with the identity when it was discovered. Imagination became invention; no one worried to inquire whether they were really the same things. Words of a real moral and spiritual import were, we will not say debased, but transferred from one scheme of values to another. There was no deliberate conjuring; the whole world conspired to see the handkerchief go into the hat a handkerchief and come out a rabbit. The language of morality became the language of materiality.

It is not hard to find a reason why the transference should have been so easily made. The process of imposing discipline upon the outer world has psychologically many points in common with the subordination of a man's own soul, and a good deal easier. But that is beside the immediate issue, which is that modern civilisation, in itself a process morally indifferent, and essentially no more than a means of enlarging the herd, managed to

accumulate an imposing moral baggage to which it had no right. So it came about that when the war burst upon the world, there was a general cry, equally convinced on both sides, that the war was being fought for civilisation; while no one who uttered the cry knew exactly what he meant. In the same way there were a few who protested that the war was the bankruptcy of civilisation, aud though they knew what they meant, it was impossible for them to convey their meaning to the great majority who had been taught to understand something quite different by civilisation, and were compelled (if they were honest) to admit that the war was rather a triumph of civilisation than the opposite.

What had really happened was that modern civilisation had incredibly increased the physical power of man. It had first made him a unit in a herd; and, secondly, armed the herd with such appliances for destroying its similars as made one single man more dangerous than a thousand of his great-grandfathers. But instead of the attempt being made to magnify

his moral consciousness in proportion, the physical intensification had so occupied the energies of the world that it was tacitly agreed to assume that the moral development proceeded *pari passu* with the material. Somehow, exactly in what way no one knew, they were the same thing. They were, in fact, totally different. The result was that war broke upon a race of men only half conscious of their strength, and vaguely believing that the strength itself was a guarantee against the misuse of it. Once the issue was engaged between the new giant organisms there was no stopping the slaughter. Imagination, so far from being commensurably developed and organised, had remained, roughly speaking, at the pre-civilisation level. There were no adequate spiritual controls. The problem is how to create them. The first step towards its solution will be the creation of the general sense that they are lacking and necessary; and the first step towards this is to demonstrate the equivocal nature of civilisation.

January, 1919.

THE EQUIVOCATION OF DEMOCRACY

Few honest men would now hesitate to admit that it is all Lombard Street to a China orange that the Great War will end very much as the little wars have ended. The victors will take everything they can lay hands on, and do their best to arrange that the vanquished shall not be able to take back what has been taken from them. The only reason which will appeal to our Jingoes why we shall not ship as large a portion as possible of the able-bodied population of Germany and set it to work in irons for our advantage is that they have learnt that slave labour in this form is uneconomical. Of course, we say that our moral sense is revolted by such a plan. But, in fact, the reason is that our much more highly developed sense of economy in industrial method warns us that

the plan would be wasteful. It is likely that if the old custom of actually enslaving the conquered people were carried into practice, the moral sense of the majority of us would eventually be disturbed. We might quickly grow tired, nauseated even, by the monotonous procession of Germans in irons on their way to menial occupations; even more quickly we should be exasperated by the slovenly way in which their work would inevitably be performed. Then there would be the wearisome protests of the indigenous Scavengers' Union, perhaps a riot or two. Altogether the system would appear out of date.

But it is not morally, but merely mechanically, obsolete. The moral intention of the Entente towards Germany appears to be exactly the same as the moral intention of the Romans to the Gauls. Indeed, this is something of a slight upon the Romans. For though it may be urged that we intend to impose a sort of *pax Romana* upon the world, we have no intention of throwing open the

advantages and prestige of Entente citizenship to our victims. Quite the contrary; the modern Roman beard must not even be shaved by a barbarian hand. And as for bestowing the benefits of a higher civilisation upon the conquered Hun, we are more likely to prove conclusively to him that we have none to bestow. Nevertheless, one is still inclined to look for the points of difference between the probable issue of this war and the known issue of wars in the past. It has been a bigger war; it will probably have bigger results. But size is an uninteresting kind of variation, to which, if the spirit is not actually insensible, it does not care to respond. Forty miles of calico is not really a more worthy object of enthusiasm than half a yard; and if the calico happens to be infamously printed—*occidit miseros*. It is the variations of quality that matter.

There is, however, one point of difference upon which, as we believe, the future historian will insist with a certain element of wonder.

We are all agreed that the war has ended in the triumph of democracy. Democracy has vanquished the enemy both from within and from without. Democracy has won a victory even more sweeping than that of Mr. George's Coalition. It is as though the voters for the Labour Party, the Independent Liberals, and Sinn Fein had all insisted upon giving their votes to Mr. George's double. The war was to be many things; it was to vindicate the rights of nationalities, to end war and to carry democracy to triumph. One of them it has indubitably performed. And this victory of democracy has peculiarities which provoke inquiry. Those who were democrats in the countries which were democracies and have won have begun to be depressed by it, while those who were democrats in the countries which were not democracies and have lost have taken heart anew. One might almost suspect that the defeated Germans were rubbing their hands at the thought that they were to be compulsorily disarmed, and that the victorious Englishmen

were dejected at the thought that they may be compulsorily armed.

But these are minor obsessions. Something more curious and fundamental lies beneath these disconcerting psychological effects of the victory of democracy. Their explanation is indeed simple; but simple explanations are not the most easy to apprehend; above all when, as in this case, they are based on the discovery of the equivocation in a word which has become, like "civilisation," a shibboleth. The blind but steady force of conservative adjusted instinct acts the janissary to the tyranny of the word. It is become a sort of blasphemy to challenge the authority of the word "democracy." Yet it must be challenged, as the conception of "civilisation" must be challenged. And this task of examining the traditional embodiments of their own ideals is a task peculiarly appropriate to the present, when the men of goodwill are condemned to wander in the wilderness. Since a period of hermitage has been thrust upon them, they

had best employ it in making their faith stronger, by assuring themselves that it is pure.

The democracy which has been victorious in the war is a system of government. A system of government is always, in itself, indifferent; it is a means to an end, and it has its worth according as it more or less powerfully contributes to the attainment of that end, which is the maximum of happiness for each individual in the society governed. In a society in which conceptions of happiness profoundly differ from man to man, or from class to class, the democratic system of government, which imposes the average conception of happiness of the majority of its members upon the minority, is inevitably bound to become for the minority a tyranny. In ordinary times, which are times of peace, conceptions of happiness within a society do not generally differ profoundly. All men are at one in regarding a life which affords them the maximum of opportunity for the satisfactions in

which they delight as the happiest life; and since there is no actual society in which any but an insignificant minority has the opportunity of finding a real satisfaction in his daily labour, there is a general consensus of opinion that the life of happiness is the life which affords the maximum of leisure. Although the question how the leisure will be employed is, in the last resort, vital, it is not urgent. Once the leisure has been secured, it is felt (and rightly felt) that the problem of the satisfactions with which it is to be filled will solve itself.

But in the stress of war this condition changes. The emphasis is violently shifted from the general agreement in pursuit of leisure to the profound diversity of the satisfactions for which it gives occasion. When every man's leisure and freedom is curtailed instead of being extended, those suffer most who have employed their freedom to the most valuable ends. And these are they who have used it to make themselves citizens of an ideal

society wherein they hold converse with men of the past and future and seek to attune themselves to harmonies of thought and imagination. They have lived in the city of the soul. By their imagination they have created for themselves obligations and rights which lie clean outside the scope of the society to whose Government they pay their taxes, and if need be, their lives. In other words, they have employed the opportunities of democratic society to transcend it. Whether in art, or science, or religion they have learned the common language of mankind; by so doing they have accepted as a truth beyond challenge that the world is peopled by men of like passions with themselves, towards whom they have obligations no less than those which they have (and recognise that they have) towards their own countrymen.

In peace the national and supernational obligations co-exist in such a manner that but few are aware of the conflict which is latent in them. The common pursuit of leisure and the

common reverence for the traditional genius of the race suffice to unite the citizens of democracy in a bond which is felt, but is not felt to be irksome. The ideal citizen is able to interpret the actual commonwealth in a way which permits him to lavish his ideal loyalty upon it, and indeed after a little while he is scarcely able to distinguish between the actual democracy and the ideal commonwealth of both of which he is a member. Actual democracy seems to him removed by only one small phase of historic evolution from the democratic ideal. He has only to live a few years longer to see his heaven on earth; the House of Commons smoothly transformed into the parliament of man, and the British Empire into the confederation of the world. When he finds in the stress of war that the democratic ideal does not flourish exceedingly, but rather seems to be stunted and withered, he is inclined to ascribe the cause to some deliberate corruption of democracy. He finds that his conception of a happiness which is impossible if purchased

by the infliction of suffering upon a defeated enemy totally at variance with the conception entertained by the majority of his countrymen. Thus he will attempt to distinguish between democracy and demagogy, and declare that owing to some malignant intervention which he is unable to define, some vague contagion in the atmosphere of war, his expectation of universal brotherhood has been frustrated.

But the truth is that there was never any warrant for his expectation. It was based on a vision of democracy as *an ideal democracy*, whereas in fact there is no necessary connection at all between the two things. Demagogy is not really corrupt democracy; it is merely democracy. When the demagogue happens to be also a citizen of the ideal society as Abraham Lincoln and William Ewart Gladstone were, the citizens of the actual democracy catch a glimmer of the ideal loyalties of their leader; when he happens to be a man who moves wholly on the plane of the actual, they, too, become *terræ filii*. So, also, democracy is not

international; it may be, one day, when a majority of the citizens of the actual are also citizens of the ideal democracy. That is a possibility which we may hope for and work for, but one which we cannot expect as a right. And, though we may be determined to work for it, our work will lack direction and resolution unless we keep our eyes wide open to the fact that the peace will probably be such that it will delay the possibility beyond our lifetime. Not only we, but President Wilson himself, is learning the bitter lesson that a victory of democracy and a victory of the democratic ideal are different things.

January, 1919.

DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOTISM

We seem to be strangely far away from the days when the cotton spinners of Lancashire faced starvation rather than help the slave-owning South against the idealist North in the American Civil War. The Lancashire operatives then proclaimed themselves citizens of an ideal democracy. Not only did they sacrifice themselves for an ideal cause, but they stood fast when even the greatest democratic leader began to weaken. Remembering these things, one might be forgiven for believing that the moral idealism of the English worker has diminished since those brave days. And yet perhaps on a steadier view there is no ground for an extreme pessimism. The moral idealism of the army of volunteers in 1914 was indubitable. It may be possible to hold that their enthusiasm was to some degree ill-

informed and therefore misguided, as certain of the narrower sect do hold, but to deny that it was disinterested is impossible for any save the deliberately perverse.

The enthusiasm of 1914 is now so remote that to analyse it seems almost an effort of antiquarian research, with pain instead of pleasure for its reward. Yet the analysis is not unimportant; it has its bearing upon the causes of our present discomfiture which it is our duty to determine. We may leave aside the disturbing commonplaces of herd psychology without making the vain attempt to controvert them, for the attempt would be no more relevant than successful. Whatever may be the nature of the profounder emotions which break on the shores of consciousness only in their remoter ripples, only those elements of them which are made conscious can be the subject of moral inquiry or the occasion of humane activity. The conscious enthusiasm of 1914 was compact of two chief elements. Occasionally, they may have existed separately;

more often they were indistinguishably blended in proportions which it would be impossible to disengage. The two elements were patriotism, or love of country, and the desire to defend a small nation against a wrong deliberately inflicted upon it by a more powerful neighbour. There were two aims : the defence of England and the defence of the right.

These two aims were largely identified, though they were not necessarily identical. The realists (who seem never to be able to carry their realism so far as to acknowledge the truth that the idealists touch reality at least as closely as they) had easy work in pointing out that, if English professions were accepted, there never had been a time when the defence of England and the defence of the right did not coincide. But their meagre dialectic was repudiated, not indeed by argument, but by the instinctive conviction of the country. The defence of England and the defence of the right were the same. The England which the volunteers of 1914 defended was the defender

of the right. And this right was not her own right, but a right to which all nations might lay claim, and which lay beyond each one of them. The patriotism of 1914 was, therefore, an ideal patriotism—that is, a patriotism which could be justified at the bar of reason, where all things must be justified to have worth.

The mark of this justification was that such a patriotism could be universalised. If all nations went to war with an impulse disciplined by such an intention, there would be no war. The society of nations would not merely be a possibility, it would exist in actual fact, for patriotism of this kind exists precisely in the recognition of the obligations which membership of an ideal society of nations imposes. Such patriotism is the meeting place of national and international loyalties, the expression of the rational triumph of humanity. We may admit that this patriotism was not conscious in all the volunteers of 1914; but those in whom it was conscious stamped the impress of their conviction upon the less rational patriotism of

their comrades. Together they were one mind, having its impulses and its ideals, but also having its impulses made harmonious and full of import in its ideals.

Moreover, this patriotism was primarily a democratic patriotism. Its impulse might have been obeyed by men who were not citizens of an actual democracy; but by their obedience such men would have declared themselves citizens of the ideal democracy, of which actual democracy is too often only the gross and distorted symbol. The mind which can recognise that nations are bound to each other by a moral law which establishes their equality of rights irrespective of the physical force which they command, is bound to recognise that a similar law enjoins equality of rights between men united in the society of a single nation. True democracy is inevitably international. Internationalism and democracy are indeed parallel expressions of the categorical imperative in the sphere of man's political activity. A democracy that is not internation-

ally minded is, in the last resort, a contradiction in terms, a monstrosity of the human spirit, possible only because those who inhabit it have minds in a state of perpetual discord, which envisage contradictory desirables. The logic of M. Sembat's famous dilemma: "Faites un roi, si non faites la paix" is incontrovertible, though its full force is hardly likely to be felt in a country which, like England, indulges in the luxury of a constitutional and constitutionally powerless King.

The general impulse of democratic patriotism did not last. There was still patriotism, but its nature slowly and subtly changed. We can see now that the deterioration was inevitable. The supremacy of the rational ideal was maintained by the active will of a few, and those few were the first to be sacrificed in its defence. For a moment they had imposed their ideal upon the general aggressive impulse of the nation; like artists, they had given to chaotic material an order, a form, and a rationality. Their work could have been

continued, if at all, by a democratic leader who shared their faith and gave it resonant utterance. Such a leader would have needed an almost superhuman courage and endurance; to how great a degree superhuman we may best judge by President Wilson's example. He was far more courageous, far more eloquent, far more determinedly democratic in the ideal sense than any English statesman; yet even he could not carry his country with him for two years of war. An English statesman of the same character would have had to bear the ever-increasing burden twice as long. We believe that a greater than Wilson would have failed. The forces struggling against the rational patriotism of 1914 increased steadily with the length of the war. Brute instinct grows vastly by the removal of rational inhibitions which war involves. When, for instance, men who but a week ago were peaceful fellow-citizens of the world suddenly become outlaws, and the wreaking of animal vengeance upon enemy civilians is condoned by the law, the moral

order of civilisation has begun to give way. No matter how just the war, or how righteous the anger may be in their origins, the moment that the full protection to which he was entitled in time of peace is denied to an unarmed enemy the contagion of injustice and brutishness has begun to invade them.

Only a tremendous moral authority can resist the invasion. If it weakens, or is absent altogether, the degradation proceeds with a terrible rapidity. The Press usurps the place of the moral authority, and the modern Press is not merely non-moral, but for the most part deliberately and necessarily immoral. It is an industrial enterprise which aims at supplying people with what they want. Unfortunately, at all times, when moral ideas are in question, there are relatively few people in a nation who know what they want, and in their ignorance they believe they want what merely pleases them at the moment. To supply the pleasure of the moment is the deliberate function of the modern Press. But in its essence it is subver-

sive of all morality and hostile to all idealism. There are in a modern society always more people who will go to see a man hanged than will go to see "Macbeth." Inevitably, therefore, a Press which exists by a maximum of circulation will provide satisfactions analogous, and often almost identical, with those of seeing a man hanged.

But patriotism, however much it may be debased, is still patriotism; and although it might be exaggeration to contend that the more debased patriotism becomes, the more patriotic it is reputed to be, it is on the other hand certainly true that a pure and rational patriotism is generally vituperated as a kind of treason. As usual, irreconcilable meanings lurk behind the convenient word. Many of the feelings and purposes sanctified by it are wholly brutish, and one can think of many modern exemplifications of Dr. Johnson's rather summary dictum that patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel. But apart from these despicable hypocrisies there is plenty of sincere and honest

patriotism which, though turned to base uses, is potentially an inexhaustible source of strength to the general good of the country and the world. Love of country is a mainspring of civic virtue. Its strong stream may easily be diverted to the work of ruin and devastation. So long as love of country has not achieved a rational form capable of being universalised, it is unstably poised between a positive and negative condition, and since the influences which are exerted upon it are for the most part deliberately destructive, it too becomes a force of destruction. Actual patriotism is akin to actual democracy, just as ideal patriotism and ideal democracy reinforce each other. The mere love of country and the mere acquisition of equality are not enough. We may, as we do, love the fields and the hills and the speech of England profoundly ; but the motion of love itself is to seek the condition of its own duration. To endure. it must attach itself to a moral being, whether a person or an ideal. Therefore a lasting patriotism depends upon

the attachment of a moral and ideal significance to the conception of country. If this condition is satisfied, patriotism becomes a completely sufficient motive for mankind. Within democracy, it must take the form of a passion for ideal democracy, which, if it could be largely felt and generally maintained, would for ever secure the peace of the world.

January, 1919.

INTERNATIONALISM AND THE INTERNATIONAL

It is fortunate for us that our opponents have not observed the defeat of imagination; their songs of jubilee would have been singularly hard to bear. But, luckily, they are not accustomed to distinguish such subtle disasters, and it might even be that if they could distinguish them their jubilant voices would become tremulous and hesitating. To understand such a catastrophe is already to be involved in it. Another defeat has, however, been large enough to impress even their blunted vision. They have observed the failure of what is called internationalism; and they lose no opportunity of recalling it to our memory. They find the occasion for their latest triumph in the falling away of certain members of the British Labour delegation to

the international conference which is planned to take place in a little while.

Nevertheless, those who triumph over the defeat of internationalism triumph prematurely. Internationalism is a far bigger thing than the International; in reality its foundations are even stronger. Yet on our own side there is a tendency to confuse these two things. The confusion is the outcome of our war experience. Many who were Internationalists in the wider sense turned during the war in their despair to the International. But their reason for so doing was that they saw in it a possible way of escape from the interminable horror of the war and a possible means of saving Russia from the torment of drinking her cup of destiny to the dregs. The International was a means to an urgent and immediate end; it was not an ideal. It was a symbol of an ideal. Not that we deceive ourselves into imagining that because the symbol which was defeated was inadequate to the ideal, the ideal itself might have triumphed. Victory would have

been easier by far for the International than for internationalism, though it would have been less permanent. But we may believe that the defeat of the lesser cause can contribute something to the eventual triumph of the greater. Those who devoted themselves to the cause of the International are no less outcast than we; they, too, have the opportunity to reconsider their faith in the glaring light of the event, and to determine how far it could ever be a sufficient vehicle of human impulse or supply an adequate aim for aspiration.

Fundamental to the theory of the International is the purpose of war. "Proletarians of all countries, unite!" is a call to arms and not to peace. If any supporters of the International had forgotten this first of the Marxian commandments, they have been reminded by the simple logic of Herr Radek's promise to the Spartacus men of Berlin: that the workers of Russia would deem it an honour to fight on the Rhine in alliance with the proletariat of Germany against the capitalism of the Entente.

And if it be argued that the Bolshevists are logicians run mad, and that they are not (what they obviously are) inexorable exponents in practice of the Marxian theory, still, even those who shrink from its more unflinching application will find themselves at the last involved by the International in war, although they may have thought that through it they were pursuing peace. For the International is an ideal of class internationalism. Let its more obvious violences be abated; still it remains true that in democratic countries Labour, in trying to assert its international solidarity, will, if it is in a minority, be brought into a conflict with the majority which is bound to be violent if it is fought out to the end. If Labour is in a majority and still strives for the International, it has an easier means of carrying its will; and the International is no longer the International at all.

By what seems hardly more than an accident of numbers the Labour International would have become democratic internationalism.

Though the transition from one to the other appears easy, the transformation undergone would be radical. It would, indeed, be almost miraculous. Since there are no miracles in the political development of a nation, we may be certain that if England does one day accept democratic internationalism, as we believe she will, she will not reach it by the road of the International. The transformation will have taken place long before the critical moment when Labour can attract a majority for the International to its side. Internationalism cannot be made a side-show. The party which attains power with the intention of putting internationalism into practice must have proclaimed it from the beginning as the first article of its public creed. Internationalism cannot be jockeyed into a place among countless other desirables. Apart from the fact that it is bound to be inconsistent with many of them, the first outburst of patriotic emotion would be enough to make the Government betray its faith, unless the nation had been educated up to,

and familiarised with, the ideal. There would always be found some one Judas in its ranks, if, indeed, there were not twenty of them, to attempt a virtual dictatorship by an appeal to the forces of crude nationalism. On the other hand, a Labour Party which put a genuine internationalism in the first place in its programme would be a Labour Party in nothing but the name. The cleavage on which it would be based would not be a class division. The sectional interest would be irrelevant. The party would be a Democratic Party and would do well to accept the title.

The practical necessity of such an evolution is merely the counterpart of a logical necessity. Internationalism, like all ideals that are more than vague and circumambient dreams, seeks to eliminate all elements of inward contradiction from itself. Class internationalism is a contradiction in terms. Either the internationalism or the class must go. Either the class yields to this inward compulsion and becomes the nation, or, on the other hand, the

class does not yield, and internationalism becomes hardly more than a cosmopolitan conspiracy. Whatever political lessons the war may have taught us, one certainly remains: the method of cosmopolitan conspiracy will not work. It cannot for a moment stand the strain even of obscurely threatened war, because it is based on the attempt to supplant a national loyalty by an international one. True internationalism is open and above board; it does not seek to undermine nationalism, but to bring that also triumphantly into the light of day. And it is, in fact, a gross superstition to suppose that the proletariat, owing to the similar circumstances of its economic position in all countries, has a monoply or a larger share of genuine international feeling than any other section of the community. For what it is worth, the economic argument holds of all sections of the community; but it is not worth much. No one is an internationalist by nature in the present stage of human development, but only by taking thought. The monopoly

of international feeling belongs in fact and by right to those in every country who think enough, and honestly enough, to realise the necessity of the international ideal.

Those who make this effort must also have the honesty to admit that patriotism is a force which they cannot ignore in themselves or in others. The attempt to ignore or to obliterate it is bound to lead to disaster. The emotion of patriotism is a source from which life is diversified and enriched. To abolish it, if that were possible, would be to impoverish life. An ideal which demands a preliminary sacrifice of this devastating kind is almost as little humane as a stylite asceticism. If we are no longer to respond to such an appeal as

> Great men have been among us: hands that penned
> And tongues that uttered wisdom,

we shall respond to precious little. Indeed, if the choice had to be made between bastard internationalism and a perfervid nationalism, we should hardly know which to choose. But that is not the choice. The choice lies between

acquiescing in a so-called patriotism which is a negation and a rejection of all our spiritual tradition, and an internationalism which accepts, delights in, and continues it. It may seem to us that our tradition is richer than that of other countries, and that we can more easily afford to rest upon our spiritual prestige; just as it seemed to Wordsworth, who continued his sonnet thus:

> France, 'tis strange,
> Hath brought forth no such souls as we had then.
> Perpetual emptiness! Unceasing change!
> No single volume paramount, no code,
> No master-spirit, no determined road,
> But equally a want of books and men.

No master-spirit! No *code!* And Napoleon still enthroned! But these are the comfortable illusions which a rational patriotism will admit. Each nation has but to reach a frame of mind in which its contribution to the spiritual riches of the world appears pre-eminent and beyond challenge, and real internationalism has begun. Even a nation may be above scrambling for

halfpence in the gutter, and may take pride in seeing to it that the halfpence are rightly distributed among those to whom they belong. So patriotism may find its rational function in guarding the temple of humanity. But if patriotism is to be realised in this true internationalism, the appeal to it must be open and unambiguous. And if it be objected that such an ideal is caviare to the general, let the internationalist reply that the appeal has never been tried with the openness and courage which it demands; that schoolboys have been known to respond to the appeal of *noblesse oblige*, and that the call of true internationalism is no more abstruse than this; that it is, indeed, identical with it.

February, 1919.

THE QUESTION

After all, we may say bravely, these years of war have shattered our illusions. We may not be, we certainly are not, happy as we once were ; we do not know in what we believe, and we do not care to look into the matter too closely, for fear that we should find in the recesses something which we do not care to look upon, much less own as ours. But still, though we do not believe in life as we once did, life takes care of itself. She is like a beautiful woman whose caprice has wrecked our youth, whose denial has made our manhood unprofitable, but to whom even in our old age, and in spite of our own self-contempt, we are bound to pay our court. Moths round the candle-flame, we know ; but moths will be moths. And a new generation will arise which will find our mistress as beautiful as she was once in our eyes, before her girlish charm changed

into the fascination of a *femme fatale.* True, we are not very heroic, according to the general notion: but then not even Spinoza is counted a hero yet. We have at least the merit of knowing more or less exactly what we are. We have no illusions, and we go on living. It is not a very edifying epitaph, but it has its points and its secret satisfactions.

You mean, he said, that on the whole the discomfort of having no illusions is roughly balanced by your being spared the disappointment of having them slowly whittled away. You find a catastrophe no worse than the contagion of the world's slow stain. I wonder whether it is really as satisfactory to grow grey during a night as to pass naturally into senility. Aren't you perhaps being brave because you have to be?

I have never, I said, been able to admit any other reason for bravery. And anyhow I don't claim to be brave. On the contrary, I suggested pretty plainly that it was my business to break with the lady. If you like,

the Stoic accent in my resignation was merely to cover a *nostalgie de la boue.* Besides, I said in so many words that I was not heroic. If I choose to make that admission heroically—well, I never claimed that the war had destroyed our poses as well as our illusions.

No . . . of course, he said slowly, and after a pause resumed. I wonder what is the precise difference between poses and illusions. . . . But the point is, I take it, that here we are and we must make the best of it. When the clouds of glory have begun to wear very thin, it's a good thing to declare that we have always regarded them as obsolete encumbrances. I understand. But do you really like the utter nakedness?

There's no question of liking or disliking, I said. I cannot admit it. It would only be admissible if I were prepared to break with the lady. Even if it's a question of more or less enthusiasm for her, I could hardly reply. She remains unique. I did not know she was so cruel; I could not have believed she would be

so utterly hard. But now that I do know, all that I have it in me to say is that I know a little more about the secret of her fascination.

But would you have her otherwise, he persisted, if you could?

There is, I said, something in me that desires, above all things, to know the truth; it is glad when the veil of illusion is torn away, and proud to acquiesce in all that it knows of necessity. The fact that life is terrible, that men cannot or will not understand the horror of another's bodily pain, the impotence or the infinitesimal and precarious power of the ideal, the savagery that lurks within men's hearts—all these things which I was not compelled to believe and therefore did not believe are now become part of my truth. If you ask me or this part of me whether I would have the truth otherwise, I can only reply that it is not even a possible question. Now that life has been revealed to us as a thing more cruel than we had imagined, we cannot turn and say that life has changed. We know that there is no variable-

ness in her, though there may be more cruelty at one moment and more kindness at another, for we understand that the cruelty is the condition of her kindness, and the kindness of her cruelty. We were boy-lovers; our infatuation clothed her with a candid innocence which is but partly hers. Now we are men, and see her as she really is. She is not less wonderful than she was because we do not trust her any more; nor indeed do we love her less because we have learned she has no heart. In truth we love her more; where we loved her carelessly in the old days, we now love desperately. The truth has a compulsion of its own to a part of our being, and to ask this part whether it would have the truth otherwise is to ask a question without meaning, for nothing other than the truth can have the ruthless and transparent quality which alone can claim and receive its homage. This part of us cries aloud that though we may be discomfited we cannot be deceived. If it has cost a million lives to reveal the truth, it cannot

protest at the sacrifice, because it knows that the sacrifice was not made in order that the truth might be discovered. (If it had been, the truth itself would have been different.) These bitter years are only four years of life. They seemed so bitter because we had been lulled into an illusion and fondly believed that life was other than it is.

You have become a fatalist, he said.

No, I have not. It is true that we accept the thing that has been. We receive the truth which it contains, and think it unworthy of ourselves to palliate or diminish its hardness. We see that it could not have been otherwise since we and other men with us were what we were; and in so far as we see that it must have been, we are masters of our destiny. The tribulation could have been less terrible, the years could have been shortened, but the plane of possibility where these things might have been true is not one where the minds of most men inhabit. It is not that life is more cruel than we imagined, but that men are. And

even here our discomfiture is mitigated by our knowledge that in spite of all momentary withdrawal we desire to live in the world of men as they are, and not in an imaginary kingdom peopled by the creatures of our brain. Not least because we were content in the old days in a world of unreal men has this disaster overtaken us. We have the truth; we are not happy, but we are content.

But are you content? he asked.

With this part of myself I am. But there is another part which counts the cost. It cries out against the suffering, and will not be comforted. To the question whether it would have these years otherwise, it can only reply: anything but what has been. What have we gained by the destruction of our illusions? Most men will live on their old illusions, and the few, among whom we count ourselves, who have lost them all, will create for themselves new ones. We have learned what men are, how powerless is their reason and how feeble and lukewarm their sympathy; we recognise

that we resembled them and, it may be, we are determined to keep our sympathy quick and our instincts disciplined. But the moment will come when, even if we are not renegade to our determination, we shall weary of seeing in men what they really are, and we shall see them perfect instead of perhaps perfectible. We shall count promise for performance in ourselves and in others, simply because that is the easier way. Indeed, the only way to live is by re-creating an illusion.

The gain is at best precarious ; more probably it is imaginary. What we have lost stands firm and unalterable. We will not reckon lives. Let us take the Stoic part and declare that death cometh soon or late, even though we know that the part ill becomes us who find no less fascination in a life in which the gold has dimmed to grey ; let us hold fast to the one unshakable fact that never before in the history of the world has so great a mass of evil been nakedly manifest. For pain is the one indubitable evil that we know. Nothing can

obliterate the mountain of suffering which has been endured. The millennium itself could not compensate for it; not even if the pain had been voluntarily sought and, so far as deliberate will could secure it, gladly endured. Even with these few there was the moment when the fiercest will failed before the bodily agony. And of the whole how many were there who suffered willingly? No glorious future, no splendid purpose achieved can ever justify these hecatombs of pain. They are adamant and elemental; they cannot be resolved into anything other than themselves, naked, unforgettable evil. Therefore, when resignation has slowly scattered its balm upon wounded memory, when determination has steeled itself to shape the world anew, we should still make heard our unavailing cry that the years and the pain of the years should be blotted out.

March, 1919.

THE REPUBLIC OF THE SPIRIT

ALTHOUGH as yet our heads ache too much from the bludgeoning of war for us to count our wounds, a menacing instinct warns us that we are somehow maimed; yet how we do not know. We have lost friends in and through whom we largely lived; and the loss is grievous to us. But we feel that our catastrophe has been more intimate and perilous by far than this. Wherein, then, does it lie? Surely we cannot be weeping like children because life has been unkind. Even if we were idealists and optimists we cannot have been so indurated as to refuse the consolation of the truth merely because the truth happened to be one which we did not desire. And who can tell whether it is better that we should continue to inhabit the castle of indolent illusion than that its

ruins should fall about our awakened heads? The earthquake has happened and we have to live amid the débris. We had better make the best of it.

So the invincible argument goes on, urging us to begin drawing our maps again, before we are too old to be masters of any country which we did not explore while we were yet young. Yet we hesitate. There is a difference between making ourselves comfortable with part of our knowledge, and squarely facing all that we know. Thus we may flee to art as to a place where there is neither wind nor snow, but a windless calm; we may turn to contemplate the motionless pageantry of the idea, permanent amid all change, and independent of the vicissitudes that beset the tenement of the knowing mind. Or we may say that art and thought, even the most abstract, can only be firmly built on the foundation of that strange equilibrium of the mind which comes, like the smooth swell after a storm, when nothing of what experience has brought has been denied

or ignored. Out of the pregnant stillness of this equilibrium may arise impulses to withdrawal and remoteness which have an outward likeness to those which urged us to escape from what we know; but they will not be the same. The contempt and abhorrence which enter into the one will not disturb and vitiate the other. Neither will there be any remnant of the illusion that we are despised and rejected prophets.

Unlike prophecy, art and thought are self-satisfying activities. If they chance to serve any social purpose the service is not one which society as a whole acknowledges. Therefore it is out of place to insist upon it. The deadliest insult you can offer to a man is to maintain that you are doing him a kindness which he cannot appreciate. Parents rightly earn the detestation of their children by this practice. The appeal of art is from one single mind to another single mind. These other single minds may be many, or they may be few; but they cannot be deliberately provided

for, because they are discovered (if indeed they are ever discovered) only by the event. The artist can claim no validity for his work apart from that which it creates. Nor is the thinker in a different case. He may claim that his conclusions must compel the assent of every honest mind; but he cannot create honest minds, any more than the poet can create sensibilities responsive to the beauty of his poetry.

There is nothing profoundly new in these considerations, but they have been reinforced with a sudden vehemence by the experiences of the war. For all the lessons which have been forced upon our minds by this upheaval unite to form one indelible impression. Mankind as a whole does no more than lip-service to the ideal. The ideal is, indeed, not one, but manifold. There is the Christian ideal of the communion of souls; there is the rational ideal of the harmonious community of self-disciplined minds; there is the scientific ideal of universal law; but common to all ideals

that have not merely usurped the name is the fact that they are universal in intention. The ideal of an Englishman, in so far as it is an ideal and not a prejudice, should be able to command the loyalty of a Chinaman: he should not have to be naturalised to appreciate it. It is not that the universality of the ideal is ever explicitly denied. Its name and potency are still invoked. No words have been more often spoken than "justice" and "civilisation." But the justice is generally the justice of Thrasymachus, and in the name of civilisation we crush its finest flower, the unimpeded activity of the individual mind.

For this very reason the endeavour must be made to establish the universality of the ideal. Even though it may have no confidence in its success, the free spirit must strive, as a condition of its own existence, that its sovereignty should be recognised by the world. Yet it must allow that the task is arduous and formidable, and must never again slumber comfortably in the illusion that its supremacy,

because it is not directly challenged, is secure. A rebel does not directly challenge the authority of a being whom he despises or ignores; he is content to be made Mayor of the Palace. It would be far better that the free spirit should acknowledge its temporal servitude and live with dignity in an attic or a tub than it should consent to be a *roi fainéant* in order to enjoy the deceptive amenities of a palace it does not command. Those who care to inquire into pedigrees can have no doubt about its royal blood, but the royalty will remain apparent only on condition that there is no misalliance nor voluntary derogation of dignity. The free spirit should behave like a king indeed, and choose to go in rags rather than wave greetings from the balcony to a crowd which it does not control.

In other words, we must no longer confuse the earthly city with the heavenly. We must remember what we have learned, that the temporal republic is the same as the spiritual only in the eyes of generous aspiration. We would

not have generous aspiration less, nor do we believe that it will be diminished for being better directed. But that unflinching honesty of its defenders, by which alone the republic of the spirit can be made impregnable, must admit that the citizenship of that republic is at present no title to honour in the temporal city. Perhaps the reason is that the honesty has in the past not been unflinching. Compromise breeds no respect, and in things of the spirit deserves none. Those who stoop to declare *vox populi, vox dei* (in other matters than political), insult their deity, their people and themselves.

The aristocracy of the spirit is the only aristocracy in the world worth having, for any man may enter it. But it can only be worth having and worth entering if it exacts the highest from itself. If it is to disregard, as it must, alien attributes such as wealth and popular esteem, it must replace these by titles more arduous. In order that it may have the strength to refuse to compromise without,

it must refuse to compromise within. To wink at any defection from its own standards, to tolerate slovenly thought or meretricious art, to admit for one single moment that the republic of the spirit is a place of licence because it is largely screened from the public eye, to forget that the rejection of the standard of the market-place is justified only by the acceptance of a far sterner morality—is to have forfeited the claim to present respect and ultimate allegiance.

Though respect and allegiance may be claimed, it is possible that they may not be given. We should not even expect that they will be given, for respect and allegiance to have spiritual worth must be given, if not in full, at least in partial knowledge of the cause. The impulse to knowledge is rare ; few people care passionately for the truth, and few for the beauty which cannot endure unless truth has gone to its making. Yet, although in comparison with the many they are few, together they would make no small company, if those

in whom the impulse to knowledge had begun to stir were not turned away by the dishonest compromise which is offered them. For it is not difficulty which turns them away so much as the unworthiness of those who profess the ideal which is set before them. Spiritual honesty rings true to many more ears than there are minds to understand its structural complexity, and it is not malice or brutishness which refuses to acknowledge an eminence that is manifested only in contemptuousness. There is no arrogance in the work of an honest mind; there is plain speaking and humility.

If, therefore, the republic of the spirit is to attract the loyalty of those without, it must at all costs maintain its inward probity. If it would defend the truth, it must itself be true. If it would gain allegiance, it must not demand it. It can compel only its citizens, and only if it does compel these will it finally attract the others. It must cherish no illusion of temporal supremacy, and be content with the knowledge that the practice of its citizen-

ship is sufficient reward. No man need join it unless he will, but once joined he must obey its single, simple law. To do less than his uttermost is to have betrayed the commonwealth to which he claims to belong.

April, 1919.

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